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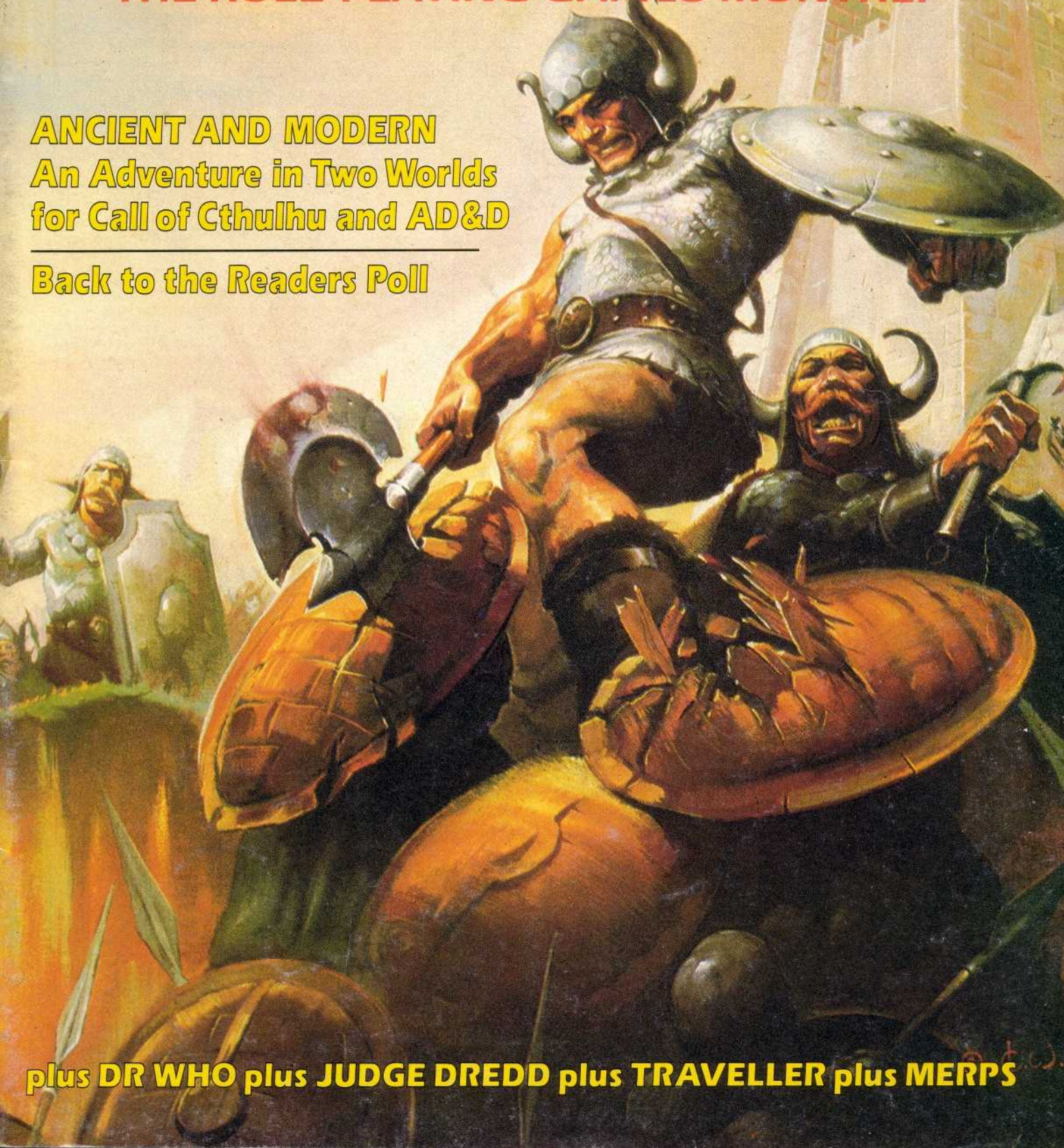
THE ROLE-PLAYING GAMES MONTHLY



ANCIENT AND MODERN
An Adventure in Two Worlds for Call of Cthulhu and AD&D

Back to the Readers Poll

plus DR WHO plus JUDGE DREDD plus TRAVELLER plus MERPS

WHITE DWARF

ISSUE 80 AUGUST 1986

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A quick glance to the right will show you that - as promised - it's *Readers Poll* time again! New readers won't have had this fun with us before, but this is your chance to have a say on what *White Dwarf* will be in the next year or so. We want to get the biggest response possible to the Poll, which is why we're offering some pretty amazin' prizes to all those who get their entries in. The more people tell us what we want to know, the better chance there is of us getting it right! We'll try to have all the votes out of the computer in October or November.

Of course, polls don't give us perfect information, because they don't tend to attract the thoughts of people who aren't readers now, but who really ought to be! So, citizen, it's your duty to not only vote yourself, but to drag in some other roleplayer or troubleshooter about town to record their vote at the nearest Games Workshop shop, and take advantage of our free figure offer. Remember the computer is your friend.

Paul Cockburn

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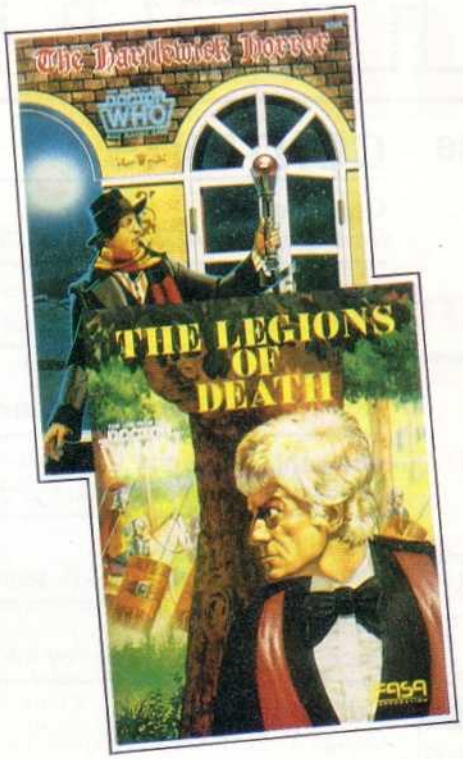


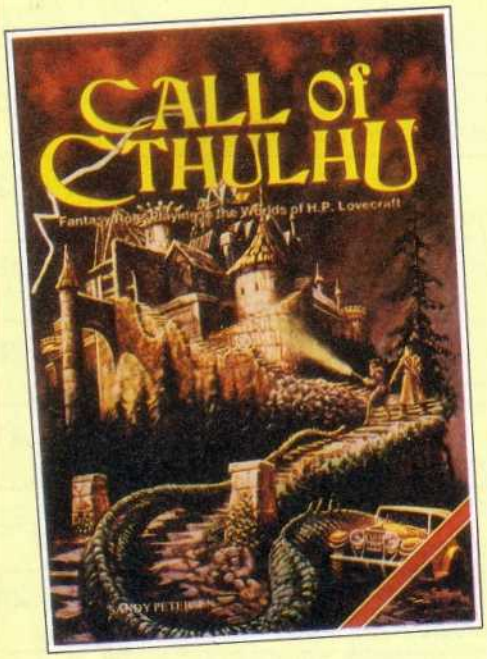
THE HARTLEWICK HORROR £4.95

THE LEGIONS OF DEATH £4.95

Roleplaying Adventures — Dr Who

FASA

Ah, now — this is more like it! Genuine 'Candy-Floss of the Daleks' -style titles adorning scenarios for the **Doctor Who RPG**! What I can't understand is why the otherwise passable artwork in FASA modules becomes distinctly dodgy when it is TV characters who are being portrayed. Could it be that the artists have never seen the programme (perish the thought!)? As for the other contents of these modules, I'll begin by looking at **The Hartlewick Horror**, the shorter (and cheaper) of the two. Describing this without giving away too much isn't easy, so I'll just say that you could be forgiven for thinking it was a scenario for a certain popular rolegame with the initials 'CoC'. It simulates the TV series very accurately in the way it pinches ideas from some other sources and uses them to



CALL OF CTHULHU
(3rd Edition)
Roleplaying Game
Games Workshop/Chaosium £9.95

For some time, **Call of Cthulhu** has been one of the most successful roleplaying games on the market. For those who have played it already, this will come as no surprise - the game has everything good roleplaying requires: a fast-moving, easily run and comprehensive rules system, and the strongest sort of background information, full of atmosphere and challenge. Being set in the 20th Century, and on Earth, allows the game to avoid worrying overmuch about geography, politics, non-adventuring NPCs and the like, and to get on with recreating the texture of the H P Lovecraft stories on which the game is based. In short, this is a cracking roleplaying game.

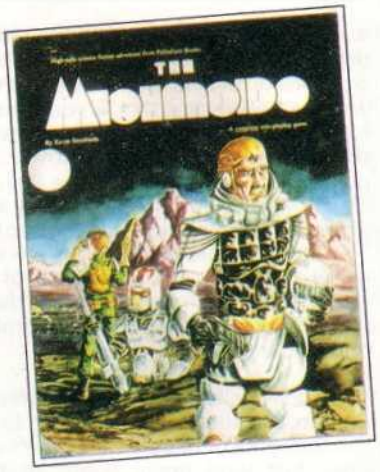
This third edition is an attempt to take the game onto an even higher level of popularity. It is presented in hardback book format, with nearly 200 pages between the covers. All the information from the Investigator's and Keeper's Books of the last edition, plus the Sourcebook for the 1920s, the Cthulhu Companion and eight colour plates make up this total, which makes the game incredibly good value. If you have never played CoC before, this might be the right time to try.

The basis of the game, as many of you will know. is the Basic Roleplaying system Chaosium have used for many of their best games, including *Runequest*. It is a skill based system, with many actions being rolled against a percentile score to determine success. Combat is simple, with skills for different weapons, and a small chance for a critical hit for those times when a single shot can kill a man. By and large, though, fighting isn't that important, since CoC is a detective game with a difference; the difference is that half the time you'd much rather not find what you are looking for!

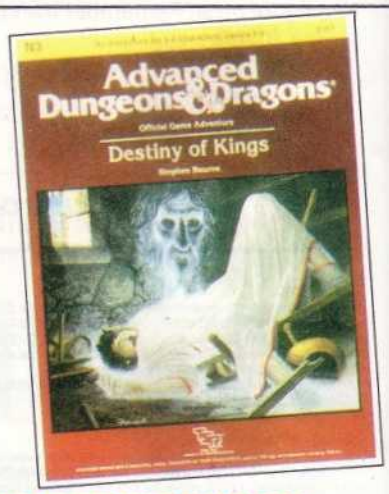
The monsters of the Cthulhu mythos are all unspeakably nasty. Thus the Zhar, the Twin Obscenity: "Zhar lives in a dead city, buried in .... China. There are two equally titanic monsters here. Zhar possesses two bodies, connected by long expanses of tentacles. When approached or disturbed, Zhar will attack by grasping with a tentacle. Anyone grasped will completely disintegrate on the next round, leaving behind only unliving, inorganic objects." In any other game this would be completely over the top ... come to that, in *this* game this is completely over the top. Investigators have to hope they never meet the thing itself, but can prevent its human - or lesser inhuman - servants from helping it to fulfill its gruseome aims. The closer you get to actually meeting Zhar, the more likely it is that the very concept of the monster will drive your character insane! Most of the books in the Mythos were 'written' by investigators who got a little too close...

The new illustrations by Tony Ackland will help those people who have struggled to visualise trembling masses of blubbery tentacles and eyeballs on stalks, and the eight colour plates by three British artists are all gruesome and atmospheric (and some are not going to be unfamiliar to Dwarf readers). All in all, this package is going to help keep Call of Cthulhu at the front of the fantasy game genre.

Ashley Shepherd



THE MECHANOIDS
Roleplaying Game
PALLADIUM £9.95



N3-DESTINY OF KINGS
Roleplaying Adventure - AD&D
TSR £5.50

create a distinctive Who scenario. The adventure is set in 1923 (another clue to its 'origins'!), in the small village of Hartlewick, not so very far from Cambridge. Strange things they be a-happening, and the intrepid Time Travellers are dispatched by the CIA to discover the source of a mysterious Energy Field. The plot is pretty simple, and designed for less experienced players — who should find it very entertaining to play in. I felt it was structured very cleanly, and the players were guided well through it, without it being too obvious that there was manipulation involved.

The main criticism is the skimping of research — Hartlewick does *not* resemble a Cambridgeshire village — the module designers are apparently unaware of the distinctive differences between English and American towns. What is more, the Hartlewick village map doesn't have certain key locations marked on it. Apart from this, the maps given are useful and well presented.

Along with the customary collection of pre-generated Player Characters (three interesting individuals), statistics are given for the Doctor's fourth incarnation (notable wax dummy Tom Baker), Leela, Sarah Jane Smith and Harry Sullivan.

The other scenario plunges the PCs into another Earth-bound adventure. Britain, in 43AD, is a peculiar place to detect the emanations of a Temporal Vechicle, so it is incumbent upon our intrepid explorers to investigate. Who is the renegade TARDIS owner? Could it be the Master, up to his usual malevolent mechinations? Who-fans across the country hold their breaths as they prepare to face **The Legions of Death**. This module is rather longer than *The Hartlewick Horror*, but I don't feel the extra space has been used as well as it might have been. Far less guidance has been given in running the adventure. Only a quarter of the booklet is taken up with development of the plot — the remainder is evenly divided between Historical Background and Gamemaster's Notes (the latter being mostly general woffle, better integrated into the plot rather than being presented as a large chunk). Because the adventure is presented in this way, the scenario will have a highly variable usefulness. In order to make full use of it, the GM will have to use the Historical information to the full, improvising events and situations to fit the main storyline. So if you want to run this scenario, you should be at least mildly interested in the Romans and their history, and the Ancient Britons. Fans of *I, Claudius* should be at home with this module.

In its favour, it has to be said that *The Legions of Death* features a players' handout, along the lines of those presented with the *Daleks* and *Master* sourcepacks (ie some pertinent information, some irrelevancies and some misinformation).

Presenting background information to the players in the form of data entries in their TARDIS computer which may be dipped into as required does a lot to inform the players without swamping them with detail.

As with *The Hartlewick Horror*, pregenerated PCs are given, including the egregious Colonel, The Third Doctor (Jon Pertwee), that paragon of fashion Jo Grant, and Sarah Jane Smith (again). As with the first Dr Who scenario, *The Iytean Menace*, there is a character in the scenario who could very easily be taken on as a new member of the TARDIS crew.

Overall, then, **The Hartlewick Horror** is the better of the two scenarios, and should provide a solid one or two sessions' gaming. **The Legions of Death** *might* provide more, but its lack of such things as maps may well flummox an inexperienced referee. Still, FASA continue to innovate, and I look forward to their future releases.

Barry Bailey

Perhaps old roleplaying games never die. Palladium have decided to revive their first (1981) product, previously entitled **The Mechanoid Invasion**, in a revised form that they hope will appeal to previous users as well as newcomers.

The original game dealt with the invasion of a human-colonised planet, Gideon-E, by awesomely powerful mutant cyborgs. It was followed by two sequels, **The Journey** and **Homeworld**, which covered the defeat of the humans, the survivors' efforts to stow away on the Mechanoids mother ship, and attempts to destroy the mutants on their home world. **The Mechanoid Invasion** was the most popular of these books.

The Mechanoids uses the same setting as the The Mechanoid Invasion, taking a starting point approximately a month after the events described in the original game. It uses the same character generation procedures — a simplified form of the system used in most other Palladium systems — and adds new weapons and equipment. Unfortunately, these changes have taken away some of the atmosphere of the original game; in the first book it was obvious that the humans stood no chance of winning, but in this new release there seems to be some hope. However, the basic flaw of the earlier game still seems to be present; there really isn't much for players to do, apart from fighting the Mechanoids, so scenarios tend to be somewhat simplistic and repetitive. A typical adventure is a cross country trek involving a few encounters with the Mechanoids, usually as part of an effort to sabotage a Mechanoid encampment or find out more about their plans. Roleplaying is limited to combat decisions, and an occasional encounter with the native inhabitants of the planet, who range from friendly to hostile and will be exterminated if they don't learn to cooperate with the humans.

It's difficult to avoid the conclusion that this system would work better as a tactical/strategic war game, rather than a roleplaying system. However, players who like exotic weaponry, combat against hopeless odds, and new ways to die will undoubtedly find this game of interest. It's compatible with *Heroes Unlimited*, *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles*, and the *Palladium Role Playing System*, so Palladium completists may want to add the gadgetry to their other games; the alien robots and cyborgs could work well in a superhero setting, or some unlikely circumstance might lead a group of intelligent animals to Gideon-E.

I didn't like this game much, since I tend to prefer roleplaying to combat systems, but more violent GMs and players may find it has something to offer.

Marcus L. Rowland

Destiny of Kings is a well-planned adventure for a medium-sized, low-level AD&D party by Stephen Bourne. It consists of a 32-page booklet and a fold-out cover including a colour area map. It would be particularly appropriate for an inexperienced or even novice party; conversely very experienced players may find it a little sparse on the intrigue and cloak-and-dagger side.

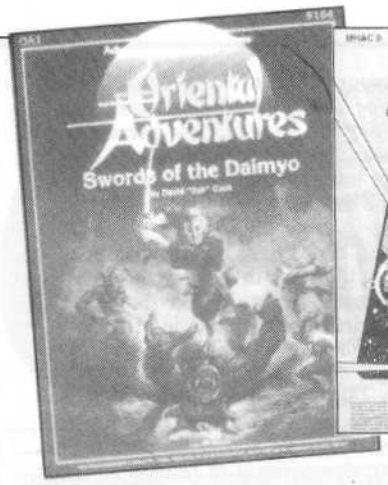
So, having summarised it, what is *Destiny of Kings* all about? Well, you might guess from the title that a royal dynasty is in trouble and needs help. The death of King Halfred of Dunador in a mysterious accident and the disappearance of the heir to the throne has meant that the wicked Lord Edrin is about to seize the reins of power. All this is explained at length to the player characters by Hollend, head of the Royal Council, who asks them to seek out the missing Prince and set the Kingdom to rights.

This, of course, is not as easy as one might think – there are scheming Dukes, raiders and corpses all over the place and potential threats lurking behind every tree and bedroom drape, or so it seems. The characters must follow the Prince's footsteps on the pilgrimage he took before the King's death, and get sidetracked by all manner of ignoble deeds which they must also uncover and rectify. Bringing the traitors to justice will prove a difficult task for most players, but the adventure is sure to provide plenty of thrills and spills.

Despite being very well introduced, with useful aids such as a glossary of names and places, a synopsis of the plot, and so on, there are a few bugs in the text. The random encounters are rather too powerful for a low level party; half the Tower Guards are missing from Montinelle (perhaps they got fed up with someone's evil schemes); there is a walled town of ludicrous design, containing a jousting field just 130′ long; but more seriously, I think too much information regarding the 'alignment' of different figures in the plot is given. This could, much more interestingly, have been left for the players to find out for themselves. I'd think twice before reading out all the passages regarding figures like Duke Aimar.

Overall, a well-thought out adventure that shouldn't be too hard to slot into an existing campaign, and would make a very good introduction for new players.

Graham Staplehurst



REALMS OF MAGIC

RPG Supplement - Marvel Super Heroes

TSR **£8.95**

Realms of Magic is a supplement for running magicians in Marvel Super Heroes. For those of us, like myself and our hoary editor, Agamotto bless him, who are great fans of *Dr Strange* it is most welcome.

In the original game, magic was glossed over, but then so was everything else bar combat, so we can't complain. There is promise of a set of "Advanced" rules in the offing which one ex-TSR employee described as "turning MSH into a real game". Perhaps that's a bit strong; I quite liked the simplicity of the original. But for those who need full rules, or in the case of MSH full background, Realms of Magic is very good, and if the Advanced rules follow suit, a pretty impressive product will result.

So what do you get? Two GM screens, one doubling as the cover, the other double-sided and including yet another copy of the Universal Table. Three books totalling 96 pages. As usual there is much genuine Marvel artwork about.

Book 1 is essentially a spell manual: what is available, how to cast them and what the effects are. It also contains a new character generation system for magician characters. Book 2 is background. It details the various magical realms found in Marvel comics, various of the more powerful magical entities, and some bits and pieces such as cults and magic items. Book 3 covers specific characters such as Dr Strange and Baron Mordo plus different types of magical creatures. Some familiar characters, notably Doctor Doom and Magik, have been reworked under the new rules.

Complaints? I think the main one is one of style. After the refreshingly simple and elegant game systems in MSH, Realms marks a return to the bad old *AD&D* style of masses of tables and long lists of specific spells. Also TSR are the unfortunate victims of the state of utter chaos that the Marvel magical universe has got into. If Realms seems confusing to you, don't blame Kim Eastland, blame twenty years of comic writers each going their own way. Having said that, if you are a comic fan and want to try to make sense of Marvel magic there is no better reference work than Realms.

But wait, we can't let an MSH™ review go without mention of you know what. Yup, those ™signs. Guess what, they've gone! Well, nearly all gone anyway. Instead one page in each booklet is given over mainly to a list of trademarked words used in the text. Credit is due to Mayfair's *DC Heroes* for pioneering this trick, but thank merciful Oshtur™ that TSR™ have followed suit.

Pete Tamlyn

DARK EMPEROR

Board Wargame

Avalon Hill **£9.95**

There aren't that many board wargames with a strong fantasy feel. There are still many people who pull out their copy of *Divine Right* and try hard to survive as the Goblin ... Anyway, it's time to report that there is a new contender for the title - **Dark Emperor**, the Game of Fantastic Warfare.

The evil Necromancer (hiss) and his legions of vampires have gated in upon the world of Loslon, to attempt to capture its wealth. Initially alone, he can gather allies from among the human and non-human denizens of the planet, and conquer others. Against him is ranged - at first - but a single invaded Kingdom. The good guys (hooray) must be recruited from the other kingdoms and characters as quickly as possible. The game is balanced about the fact that the good guys must begin to outnumber the bad guys towards the end.

The world of Loslon, and the board which represents it, are fantastic. Not a standard fantasy world, but a semi-lunar landscape, with craters filled with lakes and seas, and the land-dwellers perched about their rims. The completely different geography of this world changes all your conceptions of how to fight.

There are many nice mechanics. Units may move as far as they wish, but with each hex travelled comes an increased risk of attrition - greater in mountains than on settled land - which wears away strength. It pays to keep larger armies together if you are to move quickly (not the normal emphasis). The diplomacy and magic rules are simple and work well. Not so hot are the rules for reinforcement and combat. In the one, there can be a lot of fiddly counting of hexes to determine taxes, in the other, the Combat Results Table is rather inflexible.

But what always makes the difference with a fantasy wargame is magic. And Dark Emperor has plenty of it. Slaughtered legions can be raised from ancient battlefields, living swords can be wielded and monsters met in combat. Also, there are many spellcasters, aligned to elemental schools of magic, and Rune hexes where power can be enhanced. Several magical items appear too, which can change the balance of whole battles.

Greg Costikyan is an excellent designer, with a host of credits to his name. This might not prove to be the best of the lot, but it has a lot of play value. There are a few production flaws - a missing magic hex, a confusion of the taxes for one of the Kingdoms - and some of the design work can get in the way of the game, such as when naval units become redundant in craters at the edge of the board. But it works very well, facing players with real decisions of strategy, even if their battlefield tactics are at the whim of the dice.

Ashley Shepherd

OA1 SWORDS OF THE DAIMYO

Roleplaying Scenario & Campaign Pack - AD&D (Oriental Adventures)

TSR £6.95

OA1 Swords of the Daimyo is the first module for use with *Oriental Adventures*, but it is not quite a standard introductory level module. For a start, it is twice the size of a normal adventure module - two 32 page booklets and an extra full colour map. If you come to this expecting a huge adventure, you may well be disappointed, but if you want more than enough material to run an *OA* (or even *Bushido*) campaign, this could be exactly what you are looking for.

There are only three adventures in 64 pages and one of these is only 2 pages long. The first is a sea voyage to Kozakura (Japan) for Western AD&D characters. Anyone who has seen or read *Shogun* will know what is involved. The adventure also has a crew mutiny system, which all GMs should borrow for sea adventures. Allegedly for 6th-10th level characters, several of the possible encounters are so deadly that the 6th level bit should be taken with a pinch of sea salt. When the PCs eventually arrive in Japan - sorry, Kozakura - "it is likely that one or more will be permanently slain". And as they are done in, the Western PCs are replaced.

The other two adventures are for OA characters, involving the players in the nefarious activities of the sohei (militant clerics) of the Black Temple. As adventures both are fine, but the link between them is so distant as to be almost non-existent.

The real strength of OA1 is the background information given in the *Province Book of Miyama*. Although skewed towards the powerful and mighty in the land - how many PCs are likely to have dealings with the Imperial household? - the material is very good. It could, have included systems for working out estate income, taxes and PC involvement in the same, rather than be a detailed explanation of the social and political set-up of Miyama, but it forms a comprehensive grounding any GM can build on. The Miyama Province gazetteer gives enough interesting features to be a good starting point for any number of adventures, and the random encounters for filling blank hexes are also well worked out and consistent with the overall feel.

OA1 is a good module package. There are bad points - the sea voyage and adventure maps are not up to standard, and the small number of adventures and their slighly disjointed nature is frustrating - but these do not detract from the module's worth. It is also worth looking at if you play Bushido, as the system specific parts of the module can be easily reworked. A Chinese or a Mongol Horde module in future, perhaps?

Ashley Shepherd

DOCTOR WHO COMBAT IN

by Nigel Cole

It is probably fair to say that combat is central to, or at least a large part of, many role-playing games. I do not mean that all games encourage 'hacking and slaying' — that depends on how you play them — but that fighting something (orcs, aliens, peasants, other players) is an important factor in all of them. Having said that, I find it disappointing that so many combat systems are innocuous. *D&D* is the classic here, with 'So what if the guard has a crossbow pointed at my neck? I'll run off and take the damage, and Cedric the Cleric will give me a Cure Light Wounds', (and before I get attacked by the D&D-is-the-best-thing-since-sliced-hobbit brigade, I'd better add that I'm co-DMing a D&D campaign and it's only the combat system I don't like!). The ***Dr Who*** game is unusual in being one of the few games around in which combat is short and deadly — the only similarly dangerous systems are those produced by ICE *(MERP, RM, SM)* and pre-deluxe *Traveller* (with the carefully hidden paragraph noting that if any characteristic falls to zero, for any reason, the character must roll 10+ to survive). Dangerous combat systems make the referee's job easier (no, not by reducing the number of characters!) by keeping players' psychopathic urges in restraint (would you be so keen to make kobold mince if the little things were a serious threat?), and fights become the last resort that they're supposed to be. In fact, parties tend to ensure that they only fight from a position of advantage of if they are forced to. All this should not be taken as a suggestion to start upping the death rate of a campaign with super-lethal NPCs; it is the combat system itself that needs changing, to make both sides more lethal. I've found that the death-rate actually goes down: players take so much more care over tactics that it rubs off on the rest of the game.

Okay, enough preamble, I must now throw a few bricks at the Dr Who combat system. Although combat is suitably dangerous, it includes a few serious imbalances and a few paradoxes that can spoil the game.

Picture the scene. A fight between a savage with a dagger (a Leeia clone, perhaps?) and a martial artist (Bruce Lee in outer space!). Let's give them identical skills of V each, and identical characteristcs of STR IV and END V.

"Come on then, hit me," calls the martial artist. The savage advances, the dice indicate a hit, and the player runing the savage grins broadly as the two dice come up double six. Maximum damage!

Rod Vass © 1986

"Ouch," says the martial artist, reduced to 18 MAX OP END. He then kicks back with the same attack chance. Assuming another success, the rest of the conversation might go something like this:...

"A hit. Let's see, three dice for a martial arts kick — only 12, average-ish. Plus 4 for my strength, plus 5 for my skill, that's 21 total."

"Urrgh," goes the savage, now down to MAX OP END of 9 which is below the INACT SAVE. Even if he remains conscious, the outlook is bleak.

Why such an imbalance between two otherwise identical characters? This illustrates one of the major flaws in the system. Granted that the rules probably want to encourage unarmed rather than armed combat, but is that any reason to make the difference quite so extreme? In the example, a perfect blow (short of a critical hit) by the knife-wielder did less than two-thirds the damage of a fairly ordinary martial arts kick. Had the martial artist rolled the barest minimum damage, he would still have equalled the damage of the knife-blow. That is plainly ludicrous. The other unarmed combat attacks are slightly less extreme, but an ordinary punch is still better than a knife once skill has passed level III. Then there are a host of more minor points and errors. Strength-related medium swords are included in the skills list but left off the contact weapons table. A dexterity-related shortsword does half the damage of a dagger. Blasters superceded lasers, yet do the same damage, have poorer range and are easier to dodge. And finally, unarmed combat damage is every bit as permanent and dangerous as knife or sword damage. This article is an attempt to solve these problems.

1. Weapon Damage

This needs quite a bit of scaling up to make it comparable to unarmed combat damage.

A. Firstly, solve the printing error. In the contact weapons table, strength-related swords section, insert: — 'Medium sword 3d6 damage -2 DDF' — between short and long swords.

B. In the contact weapons table, add 1 dice to all attacks bar daggers. I would suggest doing the same for the ranged-weapons as well, unless you prefer weaker guns. Note that 'A' above has the unmodified (ie, original) damage.

C. Damage with a strength-related contact weapon is +1pt per performance level in strength (bigger muscles can swing a bigger club harder). Damage with a dexterity-related contact weapon is +1pt per proficiency level in the skill (accuracy is more important than brute force). Note that this leaves unarmed combat still superior (it gets both sets of adds, not just one), but not by so much. Optionally, these modifiers could be applied to ranged weapons, but only reasonably for point-blank and short ranges.

2. Unarmed Combat Damage

Unarmed combat damage is considered temporary, coming off CURR OP END, but every 4th point taken is real and comes off MAX OP END as well. This is considered per blow, so two blows doing 7 pts and 5 pts do only 2 pts real damage, not 3. Although temporary damage is no longer added once a person has reached their UNC THRESH, the real portion of the damage is still considered. Thus unarmed combat can still kill.

3. Armour

Here is a short extension of the armour rules:

Type	Damage Protection	DEX penalty
Plate	4d6	-3 Ivis
Chain	3d6	-2 Ivis
Leather	1d6	no penalty
Spacesuit	2d6	-3 Ivis*
Metal Shield	3d6	-1 Ivl
Wood Shield	2d6	no penalty

* : Only -2 Ivis if Environmental Suit Operation III-V.
: Needs a DEX saving throw against attacker's skill level to count.

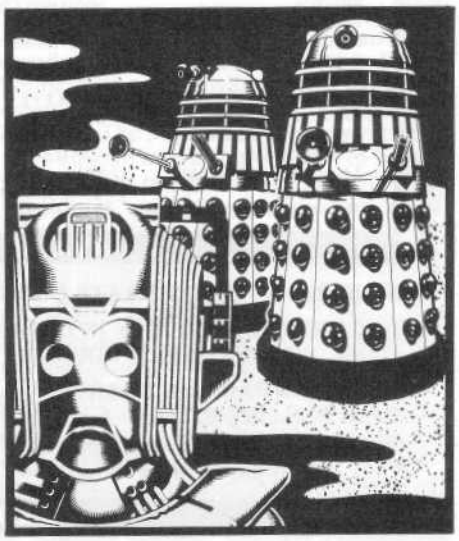
The DEX penalty is the amount DEX and related skills are effectively reduced whilst wearing armour, eg Chain would reduce a DEX performance level of IV to II.

The new DEX score is the minimum for the new performance level, and AP will have to be recalculated, eg, the character in the previous example would have a score of 3 and only 5 AP.

If DEX falls below level I because of armour (eg, a character with a DEX level of III tries wearing Plate), their DEX remains on 1 but their AP is reduced directly by the number of levels the DEX would have fallen below I. In the example, our warrior in Plate would have a DEX of 1 and AP of (4-1) 3. If a person is left with no AP (only possible in one case: original DEX of 1 and trying to wear Plate and metal shield), they cannot usefully move.

4. The Blaster

Easy enough to solve: since it is supposed to do more damage (*Sourcebook* p52), make lasers roll on Table A as if they were projectile weapons (the laser is the weakest energy weapon, so it should do least damage).



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CRITICAL MASS

A regular book review column, written by Dave Langford

To Be Continued

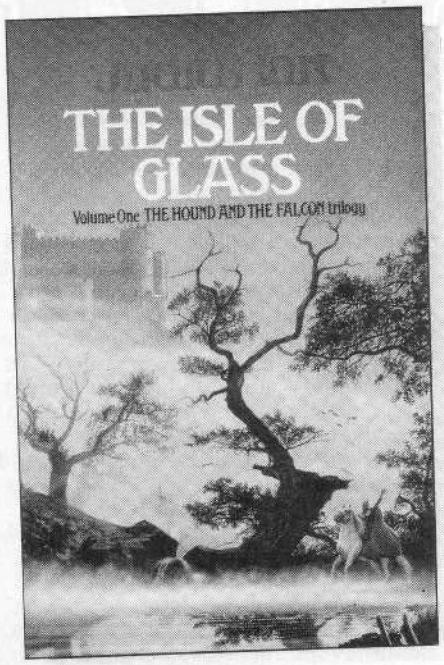
Something is stirring in SF publishing, something ancient and very terrible, dimly remembered only by alcoholic critics who swap their wheezy reminiscences of the bad old days. From its grave the undead horror rises, no longer a mere phatasm but a tangible form revealed in leprous morning light, a grisly revenant whose existence can no longer be denied. Partly rugous and partly squamous, first of a *ten*-book sequence, it leers and squatters beneath the gibbous moon. **The Invaders Plan** by L Ron Hubbard (New Era 560pp, £10.95). Is it all right if we change the subject now?

The Cthulhoid style leads naturally to Time Powers' **The Anubis Gates** (Grafton 464pp, £2.95), a breakneck romp through seedy back alleys of history .... the London of Coleridge, Byron (two Byrons, in fact) and the enigmatic poet William Ashbless, but the London also of Egyptian necromancers, the Dancing Ape Madness, the cannibal clown-king of the beggars, and a supporting cast of gypsies, doppelgangers, homunculi, time-travellers whistling Beatles tunes, and nameless sewer-dwelling abominations. What's exhilarating is the combination of dizzy pace with tight plotting; everything in the gallery of grotesque has a part to play, and despite weird complexities, there are no loose ends. None, that is, except the question of who really wrote Ashbless' poems, a point left as an exercise for the reader .... Profound it isn't but *The Anubis Gates* offers triffic entertainment and much stealable scenario background for *Call of Cockburn*, or whatever that game is called.

A different kind of horror fills Gustav Meyrink's **The Golem** (Dedalus 304pp, £3.50), a 1915 bestseller which inspired three films. Its atmosphere of surreal distortion recalls *The Cabinet of Dr Caligari*. In the Prague ghetto, every thirty-three years, the Golem appears in a room without doors. The amnesiac narrator is linked to it in an obscure, cabalistic way; the golem legend runs through the book's web of melodrama and murder. It's the sort of nightmare you might have after an evening of too much lobster and Kafka. Very strange.

Another thing which gives me nightmares is overindulgence in multi-book epics. Thus: M K Wren's **Sword of the Lamb** (NEL 436pp, £2.95) is "Book One of The Phoenix Legacy"; Cherry Wilder's **A Princess of the Chameln** (Unicorn 275pp, £3.50) is "Book One of The Rulers of Hylor Trilogy"; Moyra Caldecott's **Guardians of the Tall Stones** (Arrow 626pp, £4.95) is "Now in one volume, her brilliant trilogy". Hubbard's posthumous and even fatter outbreak has been reported on by noted US critic Don D'Ammassa: "Wait until all ten volumes are available, and then don't read any of them." On medical advice I'm rationing my trilogy intake ....

The Isle of Glass by Judith Tarr (Bantam 286pp, £8.95) bears two danger signs; "Volume One" and a plug from the ubiquitous Anne McCaffrey, but it has compensating virtues. The background of 12th century not-quite-Britain is engaging enough, with elves and ecclesiarchs in conflict under an interestingly drawn Richard Lionheart.



And Tarr can actually write. Her spare prose and dialogue give a period flavour without the dread excesses of gadzookery. Moreover, she's clearly a member of Black Lords Anonymous and the Society for the Abolition of Quest Cliches. After working hard against civil war, her elven hero is last seen heading on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. I'll admit to being interested in what happens to him there.

Though, come to think of it, even the traditional quest to zap the all-potent powers of darkness can be tweaked into novelty. Adrian Cole's **A Place Among The Fallen** (Unwin 352pp, £10.95) does so in one volume. The heart of darkness is not Someone but Somewhere; the routine of travelling from A to B is ruthlessly condensed; "goodies" include decidely unpleasant characters (eg, a gang of murderous bigots with steel claws for hands); the denouement is a network of betrayals, and the survivors not altogether those expected. Despite some indigestible chunks of background explanation and occasional rotten dialogue ("Oh, I know you still think of me as a child, with a child's wild fancies, but I sense things sometimes ...."), it's a nicely convoluted yarn.

Convolutions are what you expect from the late Frank Herbert, who with his sone Brian wrote **Man of Two Worlds** (Gollancz 317pp, £9.95). A superpowered alien Dreen and wilful Earthling are forced to share the same body and (like all Herbert characters) think a lot, in italics. Herbert Jr's influence makes for more liveliness and less metaphysical stodge, but the plot oscillates out of control; financial double-dealing and politics on Earth, battle and brothels with the French Foreign Legion on Venus (I'm not making this up), existential agonizing (in italics) on planet Dreenor .... All is egregiously concluded by a superpowered yet strangely irrelevant mystic, who wipes out virtually the entire Dreen race via psychic judo, while a fortuitous assassin solves the problem of the double-minded "hero" to allow a cheery Girl Meets Alien finale. The combination of tension and daftness (eg, Dreens are helpless against the mind-rotting Earthly herb, *basil*) makes for an odd read.

Speaking of super powers, here's Anthongy Horowitz's **The Night of the Scorpion** (Magnet 159pp, £1.75), a junior occult thriller. This moves well with a gallimaufry of precognitions, chases, ancient secrets, artificial satellites and the Nazca Lines of Peru .... but the climax goes disappointingly phut. I have a theory about this. When the Ultimate Evil of the Universe comes bursting through the portals that lead beyond space and time, one can believe in heroes who outwit it, or force it back at the cost of some supreme sacrifice, or invoke potent supernatural allies. But it seems a pretty feeble Ultimate Evil of the Universe which, as here, can be sent packing by the direct attack of two psychic kids. Evil should be made of sterner stuff ....

Quick quiz: what won last year's Hugo, Nebula and Philip K Dick Memorial awards? As a clue, here's the much-quoted first line: "The sky above the port was the colour of television, tuned to a dead channel." Yes, William Gibson's **Neuromancer** (Grafton 317pp, £2.50), a brain-scrambling novel which has flaws but moves too fast for you to notice them. The blurb fails to mention "cyberspace", the hallucinatory software battleground which is Gibson's trademark. It reminds me of the barracuda-infested undersea landscape in which Ian Fleming's most exciting scenes tended to happen. You may not believe in killer programs which invade the brain, but *Neuromancer*, if you once let it into your wetware, isn't easily erased.

Lightship (Paper Tiger 125pp, £7.95) comprises 120 classy colour paintings by our very own Jim Burns, who has either a spherical-breasted model or an enthusiastic imagination. Robert Silverberg (whose books inspired some of Burns' best efforts) contributes an introduction and Chris Evans a commentary, which tends to veer into a "Boddy Guide to SF Concepts" rather than discuss the actual artwork.

Robert Sheckley, as I've said, was writing superior Douglas Adams material long before Adams. Methuen offer an early novel, **The Status Civilization** (144pp, £2.25), and a late one, **The Alchemical Marriage of Alastair Crompton** (185pp, £2.25). The first is unsubtle, action-packed fun with satirical touches, set on a world where crime is the law and the hero soon gets into trouble for non-drug addiction. The second contain a short story's worth of plot (it *was* expanded from a short), eked out with bizarre Sheckleyisms. "It must be nice being a writer," Crompton remarks; the reply is, "It is like being a slug crawling down an infinite sheet of paper." Time I oozed to a finish ....

SOMETHING SPECIAL

by Hugh Tynan

I was extremely impressed when I first read the *Judges Manual* for the ***Judge Dredd Roleplaying Game*** and enjoyed my initial crime-fighting immensely (it made a change to be a 'goodie' for once - if you played with my *AD&D* GM you would know what I mean!). I remember the thrill of choosing and using my first special ability - Crack Shot. The idea of acquired skills appeals strongly to me, and I consider it much more rewarding than simply going up a level and altering Hit Rolls minutely. At the moment I enjoy Judge Dredd more than any other game and look forward to many happy hours blasting the *BLEEP* out of Mean Machine Angel and Judge Death. But the GM in me revels in creation even more, so here are some new, enticing, exciting, beautiful, sexy even, thoroughly play-tested Special Abilities!

If you, unlike me, start foaming at the mouth at the mention of expansions and refinements, allow me to present some justification. I do not presume to improve on anything that already exists in the JD game system, but, as I said above, I am of such a disposition that I have to be tied down to prevent my churning out NPCs by the dozen. Besides, my players (I GM as well) cry out for them (after I promise them 20 EPs each and threaten Initiative reductions, of course)!

Anyway, here is my main argument.

"One day, Judge Dredd was strolling down the Pedway, chewing his Umpty gum and turning a blind eye to the deposits which Walter was decorating the gutter with. Suddenly he turned a corner and Whoa! — there was another street stretching out in front of him! Incidentally, a Heavy Metal Kid robot was standing there also and grabbed our hero in his massive iron hand. As the giant industrial robot clubbed the struggling Judge, Dredd wished that he could recover quickly enough to attempt an escape but, alas, he couldn't

"When he came to, the Heavy Metal Kid told him he was being taken to Call-Me-Kenneth, Dredd's personal brain care specialist. He tried to punch the robot in the optical sensors, but hit too weakly to do any damage. Dredd thought how nice it would be to be able to have more effect with his fists. Luckily, after rolling 1 on D10000000, the GM ruled that the robot dropped him away, just as they reached Call-Me-Kenneth in his house at city bottom. C-M-K escaped on a hoverboard and Dredd shot at him, wishing he could estimate the movement of the board but .... He leapt onto a scooter and gave chase. C-M-K shot back at him, and Dredd wished he could avoid the shot while on the scooter, but he couldn't and the bullet punctured the front tyre. Dredd then wished (does Dredd have a ring of three wishes?) that he could drive along on the back wheel but no, you guessed it, he couldn't and he fell off *just* as a futsie took a shot at him from the watching crowd. The shot grazed his shoulder and Dredd wished he could have some kind of warning about these things. He got to his feet and ran after the futsie, as Call-Me-Kenneth had disappeared by now.

"Unfortunately, JD lost the perp in a crowd. He wished he was a better chaser. Suddenly a nearby mushroom

Mark Harrison

exploded and Dredd's face came out in lumps. He wished he was more resistant to disease, but he wasn't and unfortunately he died!''

From the above, you can be sure that if Judge Dredd's GM had read this article there would have been more fun for all, more hair-raising escapes, more grotesque revenge plots, instead of a totally inglorious ending. This article contains details on special abilities that would have allowed Dredd to do everything he wished he could do in the example above. And more as well! *Read on, Rookies!*

New Special Abilities

***Note!** You should read and understand Chapter 6 - Experienced Judges in the **Judges Manual** before you read this. Abilities marked with a star may be chosen twice to get double the benefit - see Chapter 6.*

Initiative-based Abilities

1. Recover Quickly
The Judge with this ability is exceptionally robust and doesn't get laid out very often! Whenever a roll for damage from gunfire or a hand-to-hand blow produces Stuns as a result, you may deduct 1 from the number of those Stuns. This means that a roll of 3, with no effect modifiers, normally causing 1 stun and a D6 Initiative loss, would not Stun the Judge at all, although the Initiative loss would still apply. Also, if the Judge is Knocked Out, instead of rolling a D10 to determine how many Combat Rounds he or she remain unconscious for, you may roll a D6!

2. Two Heads
The Judge with this ability has two heads. He will thus be denounced as a mutant and exiled from the city. This is a great way to get rid of a Judge you don't like!

Combat Skill Based Abilities

1. Strong Strike
This ability is similar to Knock Out. It allows the Judge to add a +1 effect modifier to all hand-to-hand blows, so that a fist, which normally has an effect modifier of −1, has no penalties at all, and a knife, usually with a +1, has +2 effect modifier instead!

2. Follow Moving Target
Judges with this special ability have spent many long hard hours down at the firing ranges, working on their shooting skills. The time spent has paid off, and, due to a great skill at judging a moving target's speed and trajectory, these Judges can shoot at a running perp or moving vehicle without the normal −10% penalty for each Action they move their weapon before they fire. It doesn't matter how many Actions they have to spend moving the gun, there is still no penalty, although obviously if the target changes course abruptly they have to start again.

Drive Skill Based Abilities

1. Avoid shots
The Judge who chooses this special ability has a chance of dodging any shots fired at him or his vehicle by someone in front of him. If the vehicle is a one or two seater ground or hover vehicle that weighs less than a tonne, and the shot if fired by someone over 10 metres away and from a position in a 90 degree arc in front of the Judge, then the attempt may succeed. The Judge need not have any free actions; the whole move is part of a drive action. To avoid the shot, just roll a number equal to or less than the Judges drive skill - this signifies success and it can be assumed that the Judge jerked his or her vehicle out of the way of the shot, but remained roughly on course. If the roll fails, the shot will hit a random part of the vehicle, and the GM may decide to make the player roll for Control Loss.

***Note:** The Judge must normally have been watching the person who makes the shot, although there is a slight chance that he might notice the person with the gun in time - this is up to the GM to decide according to the amount of people nearby, etc.*

2. Lawmaster 'Wheelie'
This ability can be a very useful one. It allows the Judge to jerk his or her Lawmaster up onto the back wheel and drive along on that, with only a slight (10%) reduction in speed. This has the advantage of shielding the rider and the rest of the Lawmaster from any shots from straight ahead with the large, bulletproof tyre. The rider can still see where he or she is going and all Lawmaster functions work as normal. The attempt to 'wheelie' works automatically, but if the Lawmaster hits any obstruction (a kerb, sign, etc) a roll should be made for Control Loss.

***Now for the good bit:** If you collide with a perp while on the back wheel, the Lawmaster's front wheel will return to the ground (this will cost one action - if the next action is over two phases away, a roll should be made for Control Loss), the perp will be knocked to the ground and the Lawmaster will run over him, causing 1 random hit with a +1 effect modifier.*

Technical Skill Based Abilities

1. Recognise Vital Spot
This ability allows the Judge to find a spot on any robot, spaceship, vehicle or other mechanism where a single, direct, General Purpose shot will completely disable that item. He can also direct other Judges, perhaps with a higher CS, to shoot at this spot; in such instances the vital point is always treated as a small target, regardless of the size of the whole, so that a successful small target shot will destroy the item. The chance of the Judge finding such a spot is equal to his Technical Skill as a percentage (it is assumed that all robots, vehicles, etc, have such a weak spot, even war droids and battle-cruisers). It takes a really good Judge to find it sometimes - but the GM can always change this if he thinks the Judge needs a break. If the roll fails once, it cannot be attempted again, and the attempt cannot be made as a part of any other action. The effect of a successful shot on this point will vary at the GMs discretion, but the item should *always* cease functioning. This may be repairable - alternatively, the item could be blown to pieces!

2. Access ★
This very basic, but highly useful ability enables Judges to add 10% to their chance of using a radio successfully when rolling against Tech Skill as a percentage. This 10% bonus also applies when accessing MAC or Barney.

Street Skill Based Abilities

1. Sense Aim
This ability confers a rather remarkable skill; the Judge is sometimes able to sense when a perp is aiming a weapon at him! Whenever some nefarious person is performing an Aim Action with the Judge as the target, the GM will roll in secret to see if the Judge senses this. The chance of success is the Judges Street Skill minus the distance from the weapon in metres, rolled as a percentage. The GM should then say something like ''You feel that prickling sensation at the back of your neck, and you realise that someone is aiming at you!''

For example, Judge Collins is standing on a street corner, watching citizens go about their business. Unknown to him, a perp is aiming a laser rifle at him from a window 20 metres away. The GM subtracts 20 from Collins' Street Skill - 52 - and rolls a D100. A roll of 32 or less means Collins senses the aim, and the GM rolls 27. Collins starts feeling very uncomfortable about something. He has experienced this sensation before and dives for cover behind a parked roadster, just as a laser beam streaks out from a window in the Davy Byrne block behind him and hits the pavement where he stood a split second ago ....

2. Pursue Perp ★
Occasionally, when a Judge is chasing a Perp, he or she may lose them in a crowd or around a corner. The chance of keeping tabs on the perp is usually the average of Initiative and Street Skill scores rolled as a percentage. with this ability however, you may add 10% to your chances of successfully keeping after him.

It is quite possible you people may disapprove of some of the conditions I have put forward, so if you, gentle reader (Don'tcha hate being called 'Gentle Reader'?) think I have done something in the wrong way or have created some profound inanity, remember I present these new special abilities only as suggestions, albeit ones that work well in the Mega-City.

Clouding the Issue

BY CHRIS BARLOW

Garim has found a sword capable of detecting elevator rooms. Hazaan the Paladin can detect evil. Sheena has a **robe of eyes**. Together, they provide their party with just some of the standard detection powers available to hard-pressed adventurers in the AD&D game. But for most GMs, these minor powers and trinkets can pose sudden surprises during the adventure, when they will totally ruin an encounter.

Unknowingly, most GMs allow their players' characters to accumulate a few detect powers during the early parts of their careers. But as the list gets longer, those same GMs grit their teeth with frustration as the party reveals its numerous powers of detection. An AD&D party could have nearly forty standard 'detects' - excluding **wish**, artefacts, **locate object**, **commune**, **contact higher planes** and several other possible options. As the list gets longer, the GM realises he might just as well leave the treasure at the entrance to the dungeon.

The problem - for those still unaware of it - is that every power of detection a party has places limitations on the GM in terms of running an exciting adventure. Invisible treasures, hidden entrances, disguised monsters - all can be revealed, often automatically. The challenge facing the players is, as a consequence, lessened.

It is a difficult problem to anticipate. When designing an adventure you rarely know what, or how many, detects a party will use from those available. Minimising the effects of the detects, by making tricks and traps harder, for example, might be a dangerous course when the party doesn't have the expected powers. An alternative is to keep the danger level low, but to have information swamp the party and keep them occupied. Or, as a final choice, the dungeon designer can include as many concepts and ideas as possible, so that the effect of having only a few detects is minimised - the PC might detect the invisible monster, but what about the sliding wall, the pit or the blade trap?

Ultimately, however, the extent and the precise nature of a party's ability to foresee events will only become known when the players announce their line up and the detect powers taken along. Ruling that a player must announce when they are using a particular detect rarely helps; players simply produce a checklist and make a habit of running through it.

With this in mind, the following ideas are intended for use 'on the spur of the moment', though they can be used in the initial design of an adventure and most benefit from the extra care and attention this involves. The specific examples concern AD&D, though the technique is common to many games where skills or powers the players to 'second guess' the adventure.

If you have any difficulty justifying this to your players, the best line to take is that if magic is as common in the AD&D universe as it appears to be, people will know these detect abilities exist, and those who want to keep something hidden will take precautions against nosey MUs. Any halfway intelligent opponent who can come up with the evil and diabolical plan your adventure contains is perfectly capable of a few simple defences.

Simple Steps

Sometimes, simple steps can reduce the effectiveness of several detects, and such steps should not be overlooked in pursuit of more exotic measures.

Coverings can usually be added to the description of a room and used to hide - if only for a little while - whatever is present. After all, nothing can be more frustrating than a party which doesn't even visit a location because they saw it through a **crystal ball**.... Tapestries behind which monsters lurk, trap doors hidden beneath the carpet, secret doors behind wood panelling - all of these are simple devices for concealing monsters, traps and treasure from those who don't make a physical search. If added interest is provided - a shimmering, silvery curtain, or a large mirror, hung from the ceiling - then what has been or might be detected will sometimes be overlooked in a fruitless search for the 'truth' behind the strange object.

Floor coverings might help disguise the slope of a passage, or the floor could be made markedly uneven, with flights of stairs and reverse slopes to confuse items that detect the fact that the party is getting a long way underground.

Walls can be made thick enough to prevent **x-ray vision** or **telepathy**, but if your adventure is set underground, try a more positive approach. Enforce the fact that many areas of the dungeon are unlit. What price having x-ray vision if the room on the other side of the wall is pitch black? Certainly, there's no need to allow characters with infravision or a running **continual light** to be able to extend that power through a wall.

Darkness can be a great helper. Include areas of magical **darkness**, **continual darkness** or - if a suitably high level MU is around - a curtain of blackness cast from a **wand of conjuration** to limit normal powers, unless countered by magic from the party. **Eyes of the eagle**, a **gem of seeing** or a **robe of eyes** will all be reduced in effectiveness, making it harder for hidden or invisible objects to be found.

A similar option is the introduction of fog or a snow whiteout, reducing vision to short distances. Be sparing on the use of weather phenomena, since they are powerful devices, and players might smell a rat if it is always the day of an eclipse when they go out. When used, however, they add a different feel to an adventure and for this reason alone they are worth using at least once. Siting the adventure on a moor or near a swamp are probably the easiest ways of achieving the effect, but an **eversmoking bottle** works extremely well! Steam is a further alternative.

The form of treasure can be varied - antiques, vintage brandy - and it can be split up, making it harder to defend but potentially harder to find (if in doubt, work on the assumption that the party *will* succeed in killing the monsters and overcoming the traps, no matter how well you have protected the treasure).

The Blanket Approach

The aim of this more subtle approach is to activate the detect(s) you wish to nullify all the time. In simple form, **detect evil** or **detect magic** will be broadcasting incessantly if large numbers of minor nasties or magicks are scattered throughout the dungeon. More deviously, an adventurer's trusty **wand of pit detection** constantly registers positive, and yet no pits can be found in the room. How come? Well, maybe the pit activating the wand is only very small; not exactly what the party is looking for. If every room has such a pit, the party aren't likely to be careful enough when the first 10′ pit with poisoned spikes at the bottom appears. The wand will be of no assistance. Alternatively, lessen its credibility by making the whole floor of a room the pit! This same technique will work just as well with traps and secret doors.

A few points need to be considered when using this method, however. **Invisibility**, for example. If you make everything invisible, you will either prevent the party from going on with the adventure, or force them to use **detect invisible** all the time. As a consequence, they will see the treasure or the monster you really wished to hide. Instead, scatter a little invisible dust around; have it thrown into the wind or cast into a raincloud. You could even, if you wished, create a sort of air conditioning system. A reservoir of water, for example, upon which invisibility is cast, and which is allowed to evaporate and permeate the dungeon. If it circulates, or if the invisible objects are made invisible again in some other way, the party will only have the objects in sight while their spell lasts, and you might rule that magical items which allow the user to see invisible objects at will would be negated if the objects were disappearing again instantly.

Detects which involve living creatures or mental thought are more difficult to deal with in this way. In order not to change the dungeon significantly, care must be taken to ensure that the creatures introduced to mask certain detects do not themselves present additional dangers to the party. Ideally, the creatures should be small (or otherwise unintrusive), passive and potentially numerous (so that one or more in each of a dozen rooms would not be out of place).

For example, larvae could be imprisoned within the home of an evil priest. The creatures, living in honeycombed walls, will successfully activate **detect evil**. Alternatively, rats or other rodents could be introduced, with tiny burrows throughout the dungeon. These cretaures need not necessarily be evil: a colony of undead mice, a hive of charmed bees, or just a swarm included only to confuse **ESP**.

In the right locations, non-violent ghosts - phantoms and hauntings in particular - can be used in substantial numbers to confuse **detect undead**. Several other creatures are suitable for use.

Another consideration. Paladins will feel particularly uneasy about the aura of evil,

but when including measures to activate a detect all the time, check what effect your change will have upon any special purpose swords present. You may wish to reconsider if your actions leave the fighters of the party trying to demolish every wall in sight....

Hide and Seek

Capitalising on the imprecise nature of a detect - its inability to give more than a general idea of whatever has been detected or any specific information - is another approach that can be very fruitful.

Items which locate treasure give the general direction, so clever parties use triangulation to find the exact location. So why not introduce a lake or stream, and put the treasure on a moving barge? Elevator rooms, or creatures that carry their treasure with them create the same effect, particularly where the treasure can undergo instantaneous movement, through teleportation, dimension door or planar travel. If the PCs cannot see the creatures directly, their movement will cause confusion. One moment, in a particular direction, magic, treasure and good can be detected; the next, magic, treasure and evil. What's going on? Actually, a demon is chasing a brownie....

The lack of complete information allows similarities to be exploited, especially when treasure is involved. A valuable gem could be hidden within a statue of gold. This will not prevent **detect gems and precious metals** from picking up the statue, but it could foil the discovery of the gem (Campaign Headline: long lost gem discovered in statue sold on cheap by party of adventurers!).

The tiny chest used in the casting of a **Leomund's secret chest** could be 'disguised' as a jewellery box; something appropriate could then be placed in it, and it could be placed in turn inside a larger container. Stacking is bound to confuse detect spells; a second pit could be hidden inside the first, or an invisible object could be hidden behind or inside another invisible object.

An Element of Risk

If the party believes, or discovers, that the use of certain powers carries an element of risk, they are unlikely to be used repeatedly. Creatures whose gaze attack can cause petrification are very useful for such purposes. An invisible medusa's head, for example, left sitting on a shelf, or - if you want to give a warning first - a sign saying "beware of the basilisk" will make characters more cautious. A spiteful trap is to have illusionary script written in very small lettering, just waiting for someone wearing **eyes of minute seeing**....

Generally, such traps are tied to one particular detect. Once you have a suitable set, they can be used in virtually any situation.

The Finishing Touch

By adopting the above suggestions - or others like them - a GM can make the circumstances of an adventure that much more difficult, thereby bringing the challenge ahead more into line with the abilities of the adventurers. Such an approach gives the players more to think about - after all, you will only be telling them that various detects have registered positive, not why. It also avoids having to resort to desperate measures, such as telling adventurers that their magical items have suddenly stopped functioning, or that a band of orcs is demanding the hand over a particular magical item before they can pass. In fact, with a few finishing touches you can go a long way to alleviate any suspicion that you have introduced certain aspects into the adventure to make the party work harder.

Those tiny pits, for example, could be there as hidden storage places, something in which to drop small gems when unwelcome visitors call. With a little treasure, a hidden key or a simple trap, the small pits suddenly have a 'life' and purpose of their own, disguising the fact that they are there to confuse items which detect pits....

The medusa's head could be wearing a piece of jewellery, the mouse holes might contain small scavenged coins or rings, an MU employing an exotic air-conditioning system might have asthma and a valuable set of paintings to protect. Nothing, as a general rule, will dispel suspicion like treasure. Even if the amounts involved are tiny, the party will come to the conclusion that it is because of a particular detect that the 'additional' treasure has been found.

Like Argus, the mythical creature who possessed a hundred eyes, fifty of which were always open, some parties can be very difficult to surprise. Argus was lulled to sleep by the music of a flute and beheaded. The ideas in this article could have almost as dramatic an effect, but the more likely outcome is that the GM will be able to negate some of the detection powers a party might have in a more satisfactory manner than declaring that the wand no longer works. It's reasonable to expect that charged items ougth to run out a little more quickly than normal anyway, since PCs will be firing off their wands much more often trying to make sense of your machinations ....

CRIME INC.

Organised Crime for 20th Century RPGs

by Graeme Davis

The 'pulp' literature of the '20s and '30s exploited just about every setting for its two-fisted heroes. The 1920s saw a golden age of organised crime in the USA as a result of Prohibition, and sinister criminal organisations were at work in all parts of the world. Organised crime can be used to provide a number of challenges in any setting.

This article gives some basic guidelines for the referee of a 20th century RPG wishing to develop a criminal organisation. It is mainly addressed to games set in the first half of the century, such as *Daredevils, Justice Inc, Call of Cthulhu* and *Indiana Jones*, but it does not depend on any particular set of rules, and it can easily be used in a more modern setting. With a little adaptation, it could even be used in an SF or fantasy RPG.

Personnel

The first step is to generate some numbers for your gang. For completely random generation any figure between 20 and 200 is reasonable. This can be generated in a number of ways - 2d10 x 10 or 2d10 x 1d10 are two possibilities.

The result of this initial roll is the gang's basic *rank-and-file* strength *(RF)*. Other characters will appear as follows:

For every 10 R/F, there will be one *Minor Heavy (MiH)*
For every 25 R/F, there will be one *Major Heavy (MaH)*
For every 50 R/F, there will be one *Minor Boss (MiB)*
If there are 100 or more R/F, there will be one *Major Boss (MaB)*

Rank-and-File

These are simply thugs, with no real talents except brawling and limited weapon proficiency. They should be as tough as a beginning-level character; slightly tougher than the average 'innocent bystander' NPC. Most will have a 'day job', possibly in a concern run by the gang; they are not 'professional' gangsters.

Minor Heavy

This is the lowest grade of professional. They will be slightly tougher than begining-level characters, and may lead a small group of R/F, or be used as 'frighteners'.

Major Heavy

These are the junior officers of the organisation, career criminals with a range of skills to match. They are equivalent to intermediate-level characters in most respects.

Minor Boss

These characters control criminals in their employ as a semi-autonomous gang, although there is a good chance that they will have been appointed by a higher authority. A minor boss will be equivalent to an intermediate level PC with some administrative, tactical and organisational skills. Each minor boss will have 1-3 major heavies as bodyguards.

Major Boss

This character is the Godfather or Little Caesar of the organisation. Unless the organisation spans a vast area, the major boss will be the highest authority. The major boss will be an experienced character whose skills concentrate on organisation, strategy and guile. Weapon skills may be high, but are seldom needed. Each major boss has a body-guard of 1-6 major heavies.

Weapons

USA

R/F: assortment of clubs, baseball bats, saps, brass knuckles and knives. Firearms will be very rare, limited to pistol and shotgun.
MiH: knives, saps, brass knuckles; firearms a little more common.
MaH: as above; pistol more common (75-80%) - SMG on special occasions.
MiB) always pistol, probably knife
MAB) as well; rely mainly on bodyguards.

Europe

Firearms - except shotgun - less common. Many shotguns will be sawn-off, with reduced range but wider spread.

Far East

Knives much more common; R/F and MiH may also use cleavers and machete-type knives. Some may be skilled in one or more martial arts. Only higher ranks have firearms — almost always pistols.

Middle East & N Africa

Knife is most common weapon, garotte also widely used. Firearms are extremely rare, mainly pistols, with the occasional antiquated rifle. Swords might be used.

Caribbean/S America/W Africa

Cleavers and machetes will be the most common weapon. Boss ranks will probably have pistols.

Skills

The next step is to determine skills. **Skills Table I** gives the basic chance of each rank possessing some skill. In most cases, it won't be necessary to roll for every R/F thug, but they are included in case the referee wants to generate an 'ordinary' gangster in detail. Where the percentage is followed by a number in brackets, the dice should be rolled the indicated number of times, each success giving the character one skill.

Skills Table I

Rank	Basic Skill	Specialist Skill
R/F	5%	—
MiH	20% (1-3)	5%
MaH	65% (1-4)	10%
MiB	60% (1-4)	50% (1-2)
MaB	60% (1-4)	70% (1-2)

Example: *a* **major heavy** *can have 1-4 basic skills. The referee rolls a d4 and gets a result of 2, indicating that 2 percentile rolls should be made. The first roll is 07, and the second is 35 - both successes. The character has two basic skills. He also has a 10% chance of having one specialist skill, but the tile roll is 57 - failure.*

Skills Table II gives some sample skills.

Skills Table II

Basic Skills	Specialist Skills
Pick Pocket	Brewing/Distilation (USA only)
Pick Lock	Forgery
Shadowing/Persuit	Safecracking
Gambling	Elite Driving
Stealth	Law
Interrogation	Accounts
	Run Racket (see **Rackets** below)

This list of skills is given as an example - referees should compile a list appropriate to their game. If it is necessary to generate a skill level or score, this can be done according to the rules in question, bearing in mind the character's rank and experience.

Leadership and Organisation

Any gang will have leaders, normally far removed from its ground-level activities and difficult for outsiders to identify. A whole campaign might revolve around a group of player characters trying to infiltrate a gang and identify its leadership; in 'real life' this can take years of patient and careful undercover work.

Rackets

Here are some notes on some of the more popular rackets.

Bootlegging

The manufacture and distribution of alcohol by anyone not authorised to do so. In the period January 16th 1920 - December 5th 1933, all alcohol was illegal in the USA, and bootlegging was one of the biggest activities of organised crime. A whole system of underground breweries, distilleries and drinking houses sprang up.

Bootlegging can be divided into three distinct functions - manufacture, transport and distribution. Manufacture requires specialists and equipment.

Alcohol could also be obtained by smuggling *(qv)* or by stealing confiscated alcohol from the government warehouses where it was kept. Transporting bootleg alcohol could present problems - this was when the produce was at its most vulnerable to law enforcement organisations and rival gangs. Bootleg liquor was generally transported at night in convoys of lorries, each lorry carrying two armed guards in addition to the driver - one in the cab and one in with the produce.

Sale of bootleg alcohol took place through underground drinking houses called speakeasies. These were at secret locations, and potential customers had to know a password or be introduced by a trusted regular. Some speakeasies - especially in Hollywood gangster films - had elaborate precautions for hiding their drink and putting on an innocent front in the event of a raid.

Gambling

Where gambling is not illegal, it is under strict government control and heavily taxed. Many criminal organisations will be involved in gambling, some running apparently legitimate casinos.

With most games, the house makes a steady profit, and a legitimate casino can make a comfortable income for its owner. Profits will, of course, be increased if taxes are withheld - this is normally done by falsifying the accounts, and requires at least one person with an accountacy skill. In addition, games can be rigged, but this was done only rarely outside Hollywood. In the USA, many casinos were combined with speakeasies.

Organised crime can make money on illegal lotteries (the numbers game) and on horse-races and other sporting events. This is a lower-level operation, but requires at least one skilled character. Occasionally, organised crime may attempt to 'fix' a sporting event by bribing, threatening or otherwise influencing the favourite.

Protection

The gang demands payments from people and businesses in its territory, and those who refuse or fail to pay suffer a series of 'accidents'. The first few 'accidents' are fairly minor warnings, but they can develop into destruction of property, and even murder. Sometimes protection rackets use insurance and mutual aid societies as cover. The protection racket requires no skilled personnel.

Loansharking

This simple racket requires no specialist personnel. Basically, the organisation lends money at very high rates of interest to desperate people who cannot get a loan elsewhere - people with heavy gambling debts, for example, or small businessmen already mortgaged to the hilt. If a customer fails to meet a repayment, the interest rate can jump sharply, and further failure to pay can result in violence to the debtor or siezure of property.

Smuggling

Obviously, the higher the duty on an imported item, the more money there is to be made smuggling it. Wines and spirits are tradional smugglers's fare, as are high-quality watches, precious stones

Dave Carson © 1986

and jewellery. Smuggling is the only way to bring illegal substances, such as drugs, into a country.

Small objects can be carried by individuals, but for larger or more regular cargoes the co-operation of a ship or aircraft owner is essential. The craft might be specially modified to hide contraband. An organisation could run a legitimate shipping line as a cover for a regular smuggling operation.

Drugs

In China and South-East Asia, drugs like opium were as important as alcohol was in the USA. Cocaine was a product of South America and may have been transported through the Caribbean, although it was not such a major operation as it has become in the 1980s.

Distribution generally takes place at 'street level' by a number of independant dealers. Most dealers were addicts themselves, so that the organisation could maintain control over them by threatening to cut off their supply; the gangsters were too smart to use drugs themselves. As with alcohol, production requires specialist personnel.

Vice

Not just a major source of income, vice can be used to pay off corrupt officials and blackmail others. A popular plot in 20s and 30s 'pulps' was the 'white slave trade', by which young European and American women were kidnapped and transported overseas - generally to the Far East - to a fate worse than death in dockside bars.

Imitations

A cheap watch can be sold at immense profit if it has 'Rolex Waterproof' inscribed on the back, and a bottle of home-brewed rotgut becomes expensive liquor if the label says 'Johnnie Walker'. This practice is most common outside the USA and Europe, where the 'real thing' is too readily obtainable for comfort, but is not unknown even there.

Legitimate Companies

As well as providing fronts for other activities, the accounts of these businesses can be used for 'laundering money' - disguising the source of ill-gotten gains and making them look like legitimate profit. This process requires a character with an accounting skill, and can only be detected by another skilled character.

Where a business is owned by criminals, its competitors may find themselves forced out of business by various means. American gangsters infiltrated the unions with the aim of forcing large corporations to do business only with companies they owned.

Others

A criminal organisation will exploit any opportunity circumstaces may offer. In politically unstable areas, there may be money in gunrunning. If possible, they will take money from both sides. In the early 20th century, people from all parts of the world wanted to get into the USA, so that there was a lot of money to be made on forged immigration papers and immigrant smuggling.

Essentially, the referee should look at the environment within which the organisation operates, and determine how best it can be exploited.

Agents and Associates

No gang is an island, and from time to time all will have dealings with outside bodies of one kind or another. Here are a few of the more common types.

Specialists

A gang will hire specialists for important one-off jobs. The most popular specialist in modern-day gangster fiction is the **hit man** - a highly-skilled assasin who charges a high price but guarantees success. In the 20s and 30s, gangsters generally took care of their own assassinations, but it would be possible to use a specialist assassin as an arch-villain in a 'pulps' RPG scenario. In exotic settings, characters like Ninja or Thuggee could fill this role admirably.

Forgers are among the most useful specialists in day-to-day operations. Forging banknotes is a laborious and often risky business - forged shipping documents and whisky labels are easier and often more profitable.

Accountants and **lawyers** are also very useful to criminal organisations. They will normally be employed by an organisation-run business, where their skills can be called upon when needed.

Skills such as safecracking, confidence trickery and burglary are not generally on the list, since most large-scale organisations prefer to make their money steadily and quietly. Large and spectacular crimes like bank robbery are generally carried out by small independent gangs, and criminal organisations generally resent the disturbance they cause as much as the authorities.

Contacts

Criminal organisations in different areas may have friendly relations with one another, and may do business together. This means that a fugitive from a gang may not escape their displeasure simply by leaving their territory, and it also makes smuggling operations easier. On rare occasions, a number of organisations might band together to form a nationwide syndicate, controlling all organised crime over a large area.

The Establishment

Any organisation of any size will have establishment contacts of one kind or another. Police officers or other officials can be kept loyal to the organisation by corruption or blackmail. Larger organisations will have contacts at higher levels, and leaders will be active in local politics, sponsoring candidates and so on. Establishment contacts are used to minimise official interference with day-to-day business, and initially at least, they are required only to turn a blind eye. Later, when the organisation is more certain that it can command their loyalty by one means or another, larger 'favours' may be asked.

A Sample Organisation

I have set this example in the docklands area of Singapore, an area of predominantly Chinese and Malay population under British colonial government. I have already decided that the gang is Chinese-run and based round one or two dockland businesses. Rolling 2d10 for basic numbers, I get a result of 9, giving me 90 rank-and-file gang members. In turn, this means there are minor heavies, 3 major heavies and one minor boss.

Most personnel will be armed with knives, and some will use cleavers or machetes. I decide the higher ranks are skilled in martial arts, and given the gang's Chinese background, it is reasonable to expect 10% of the rank-and-file to be martial artists as well. The major heavies and the boss all carry pistols, and the boss nearly always keeps two of the major heavies with him as bodyguards. Full NPC profiles are then generated for the 14 higher rank characters according to the game system being used.

The next step is to define the gang's territory. As a rule of thumb, a gang can control one city block for every two or three rank-and-file, so the gang's territory extends for some 30-40 blocks of the dock area. I trace out a suitable area on my campaign map, bearing in mind that the sites of most of their activities will be towards the middle of their territory.

Next I look at rackets. Since the scenario I'm planning has to do with smuggled goods - that's why I set the gang in the docks in the first place - that will be their main concern. They will also be involved in the two 'bread and butter' rackets of protection and loansharking. I decide that they will not demand protection money from Chinese in their territory, and that rates of interest will be doubled on loans to Malays. In this way, the gang will be popular with the Chinese population, add gambling that to the list of rackets. This will mostly be on back-room games of mah-jong, although they will also take bets on the British-run horse racing every season, as well as boxing or martial arts bouts, cockfights and fish fights (the Siamese Fighting Fish has made and lost many fortunes in South-East Asia). Finally, the gang will have control of one or two opium dens, as well as dockside bars and houses of ill repute. The functions of all three might well be covered by one or two buildings. These are placed on the campaign map, along with any legitimate businesses, which I decide will consist of a small shipping and export company. This will be the gang's headquarters, run by the boss in person.

Finally, I look at contacts and associates. Since the leader is only a minor boss, he might be working for a higher-level boss somewhere in the city's commercial and political circles, in which case the gang will have more or less friendly relations with others operating in other parts of Singapore. The docklands area will be a fairly lawless district, and police patrols will be infrequent and uninquisitive. Occasional payoffs to, say, two sargeants and one inspector should be enough for most everyday purposes. The distant high-level boss, of course, will have his own web of contacts and corruption, reaching into the highest commercial and political circles.

Now that we have the basic profile of the gang, I can fill in the necessary game statistics, finish designing the initial scenario (and in the meantime I've had ideas for two or three others), and just add the players!

THRUD THE BARBARIAN

THE "RELIANT" LIFEBOAT/LAUNCH

by Thomas M Price

A generic escape craft for SF role-playing games.

A good many *Traveller* or other SF based adventures have the long-suffering characters making use of the ubiquitous "lifeboat" in the course of their travels. The following article details the specifications and operation of one model of lifeboat commonly available. The statistics and descriptions provided are presented for the *Traveller* game system, but can easily be applied to any SF RPG.

BASIC SPECIFICATIONS

Manufacturer: Ling-Standard Products
Cost: 14 MCr
All up weight: 20 ton
Max engine thrust: 1G

Designed for 1 x Atmospheric re-entry or unlimited use as a ship's launch (under Zero-Gee).

Fuel: 1 Ton
Configuration options:

Mod.1A	*2 Crew, 20 low berths*	*5 passengers, no cargo*
Mod.1B	*2 Crew no low berths*	*5 passengers, 10 tons cargo*
Mod.1C	*2 Crew no low berths,*	*25 passengers no cargo*

*There are two configuration options for the Airlock/fresher/equipment locker unit as shown in the diagrams. These are designated as Mod.**1 or Mod.**2.*

The emergency Low Berths used on "Reliant" model lifeboats are modular long-life 2-person berths. The berths are cylindrical, weigh 0.5 tons each, and can operate on internal batteries for 90 days when disconnected from the ship. These cost 100,000 Cr (+ 10,000 Cr for the long-life battery) if purchased separately.

OPERATION : LIFEBOAT MODE

The lifeboat automatically operates in this mode unless manually overridden into the "ship's launch" mode.

Opening the inner hatch starts the automatic power-up sequence, and the final update dump of navigation data from the ship's computer. Closing and sealing the outer hatch allows the lifeboat to be launched. If no manual launch instruction is received, launch is automatic upon any of the following conditions being met: destruction of the pressure integrity of the parent ship; failure of the parent ship's computer/power plant/maneouver drive during this sequence; 5 minutes elapsed from door closure. The emergency manual launch lever is clearly marked above the main control panel.

Escape from the parent ship is effected by chemical rockets, giving 6G thrust for 10 seconds. This is followed by an evaluation phase for the lifeboat's on-board computer during which telemetry instruments are deployed. During this phase the computer will decide whether the launch was "hostile" (eg, caused by sabotage or an external attack on the parent ship), or a "disaster" launch, caused by a meteor strike or critical ship's system failure. If the parent ship's computer was running ANTI-HIJACK or RETURN FIRE programs at the time of the launch it will assume a hostile launch. If there is doubt, the computer will assume a disaster launch profile.

The lifeboat will commence a mayday broadcast on all standard comms channels. The computer will then ascertain the optimum survival course selection. If there is a choice between two different courses of equal survival probability, the course taking the shortest time will be selected. In uninhabited systems it will head for the nearest habitable planet to land. In an inhabited system it will head for the nearest space facility or inhabited world to orbit; if nothing approaches the ship within 6 hours of orbit being established, the ship will land.

On landing, the ship will avoid inhabited areas and attempt to land in the temperate/sub tropical region of the planet. After atmospheric breaking and re-entry, the ship computer will determine whether the paraglider sail is capable of a soft landing in the atmosphere of that planet. If not, the ship will jettison the powerplant unit to reduce weight and allow a soft landing in a thin atmosphere. The powerplant will fall into the sea (if possible) and the ship will attempt to land within 30 miles of a coast in open ground. If the terrain is unsuitable it will attempt to land in a landlocked lake. When the powerplant is jettisoned, a drag-stabiliser is deployed to preserve ballistic stability.

The paraglider sail is now deployed to enable a soft landing. On touchdown, the sail cables are cut to prevent dragging in high winds. A high visibility marker balloon with a radar reflector strobe beacon and antenna is then deployed on a 300m cable. A dye projector fires a number of "dyeslugs" around the ship, marking the local area with orange dye.

LONG TERM SURVIVAL

The mean time to failure for the marker balloon is 14 days; however, the strobe beacon will continue to function for a further 20 days. It should be repositioned at some nearby high point after the balloon fails. The compartment housing the paraglider sail will collect rainwater, which is passed via a filter to the interior reservoir. Locally collected water should be filtered in this way. Ship facilities include heating, lighting, a standard fresher, cooker and sterilisation/preservation compartment. Mean time to failure for ship's facilities (except computer) is 75 days (maximum use) to 300 days (minimum use); these figures are reduced to 8/30 days if the power plant has been jettisoned.

The ship is equipped with 20 survival packs, contents as follows:

- 1 x Filter/Respirator
- 8 x 1 litre cans of water
- 1 x Torch (240 hrs)
- 1 x Ration pack (30 days)
- 1 x Long range radio
- 4 x Rocket flares
- 1 x Survival rifle
- 1 x Waterproof sheet
- 1 x Reel of cord (300m)
- 1 x Rope (50m)
- 1 x Hammer
- 24 x Spikes
- 1 x First Aid kit
- 1 x Machete
- 1 x Monocular
- 1 x Sleeping/shelter bag
- 1 x Packing case + frame
- 1 x Water purification kit
- 1 x Miscellaneous kit: Compass, lighter, fish-hooks, line, gloves, sunglasses, survival manual etc.

The total survival kit fits into a water-tight, rigid case 30 x 45 x 55cm, and weighs 25 kg. The frame is strapped to the outside of the case to allow the kit to be carried long distances.

The paraglider sail consists of 900 square metres of metallised plastic; half silvered, half matt black. The sail cables are of 1mm pre-stretched shock cord, of which 400m could be salvaged. The sail also contains 20 battens of various lengths (1/2 to 3m) of 4mm flexible alloy rod. Full instructions on survival techniques are contained on the ship's computer, which has a mean time to failure of 1000 days.

"HOSTILE" LAUNCH PROFILE

During the evaluation phase, there is no mayday message broadcast from the lifeboat. A decoy, consisting of a missile with an inflatable metallised plastic envelope to give the same telemetry profile as the lifeboat, is deployed. The decoy boosts on an alternative course at a steady 16, broadcasting a mayday message. The ship then proceeds with the engine on minimum emission (50% efficiency), following the "disaster" launch profile with the following changes: a landing option will be preferred and will be attempted immediately (no orbit) in a forested area. No broadcasts are made, balloon deployed, or dyeslugs fired.

An alternative option can be selected on launch, to allow the lifeboat to coast along, hidden among the wreckage of the parent ship. The ship will reduce power to a minimum to prevent emissions escaping. The decoy can be fired normally, if required. This is a manual override option only, and the computer will not choose it on its own. Use of the decoy can be manually overridden/reprogrammed at any time if required.

EXTREME EVENTS

If the lifeboat is launched in an uninhabited system, with no habitable planets, the ship will orbit the gas giant or follow the wreckage of the parent ship. The ship systems will shut down to the mainimum power, the paraglider sail will deploy as a thermo-electric collector, and all crew should enter Low Berths. Mean time to system failure in this mode is 10 years.

If all the passengers are in Low Berths, or the crew are killed/abandon the ship on landing, the computer will decide the person(s) most likely to survive being woken from travelling Low, and will attempt to automatically revive them. This will not happen if the ship is in the minimum power option, unless another ship is approaching and the original launch was "hostile"; or the ship is in an uninhabitable area (under water, etc).

OPERATION : SHIP'S LAUNCH MODE

In this mode all lifeboat functions are disconnected and the ship will function as a launch. If at any time the emergency manual launch lever is operated, the ship functions as a lifeboat as described above.

CREW MANUAL OVERRIDE OF COMPUTER DECISIONS

If the manual launch lever is operated, the computer will assume no qualified pilot is on board and will function as described above automatically. Computer decisions and alternatives will however, be displayed on the ship status screen. Computer decisions can be overridden under this option, providing the new course of action does not substantially reduce the chance of survival.

If the ship is launched under crew control, the computer will assume the pilot will make the decisions and will merely display the suggested optimum course of action on the ship status screen.

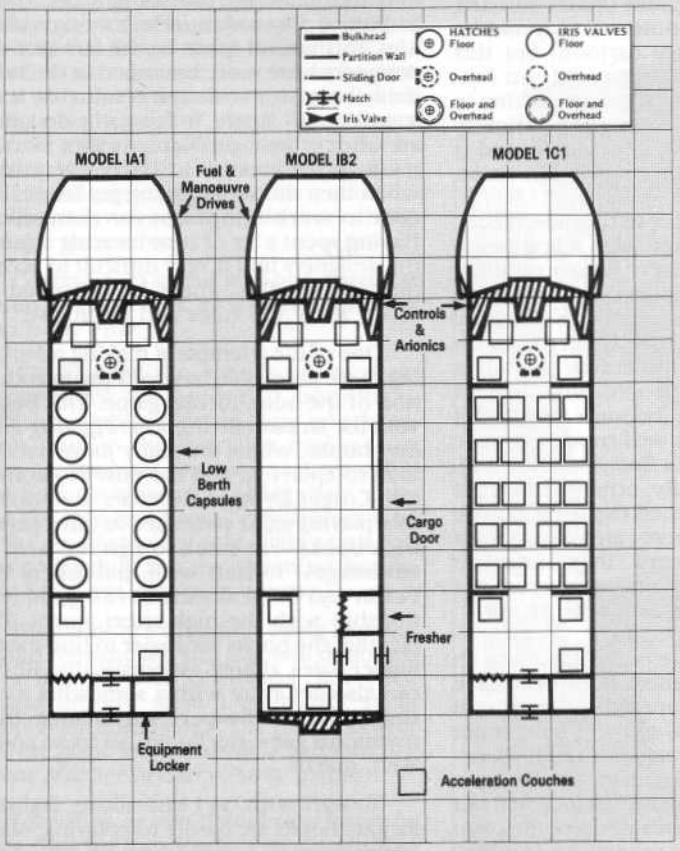
Alternative courses and survival probabilities can be displayed on request. If, however, no instructions are received within 5 minutes of a decision being required, the computer will make decision automatically.

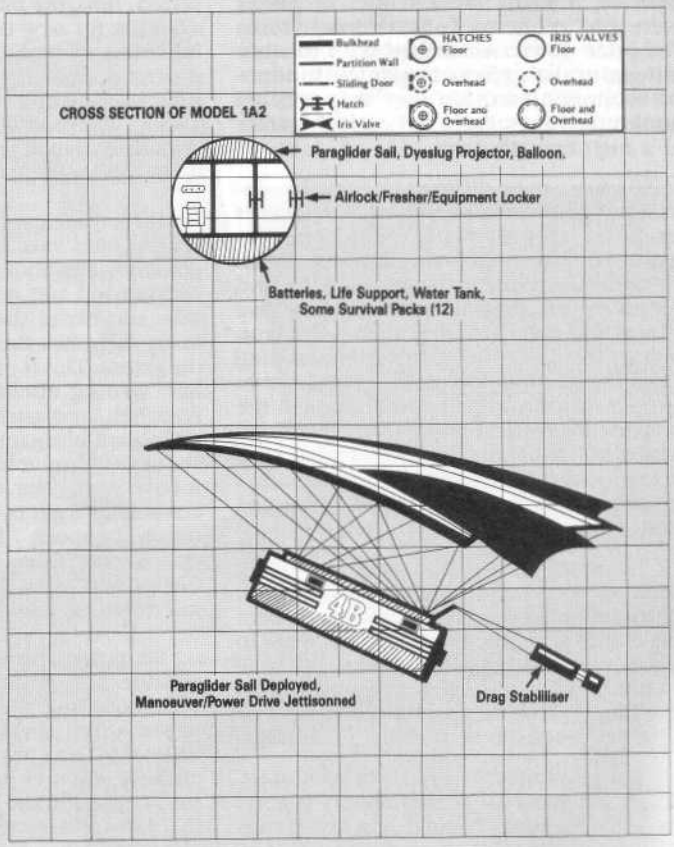
FINAL NOTES

The "Reliant" lifeboat/launch is a high quality lifeboat preferred by the "quality" end of the market. It is found in a large number of yachts and the more expensive liners. Many smaller firms custom build the basic models of the launch to customers' requirements. These models are generally more expensive as a "first buy" but cheaper second hand (if you can stand the colour schemes ....).

The user can convert the ships from the Mod.1A1 to the other models, but not vise-versa, by buying a conversion pack from the manufacturer. Attempts at moving the airlock/fresher/equipment locker unit or fitting the cargo door should only be carried out by the manufacturer or licenced agent.

Although this is an "up market" product, the "Reliant" is quite common in the Spinward Marches Subsector, as large numbers of the model 1A1 were made available after the crash of the General Atomic Shipping line in 1098.





ROLEPLAYING FOR EVERYONE

Pete Tamlyn looks at the future of roleplaying games

Despite the vast expansion in the field over the last decade, roleplaying games are still very much a minority hobby. This has a number of unfortunate consequences for players. To start with, games are very expensive; if many more copies of games were sold, economies of scale would bring the price down. Associated with this is a danger to the games companies. In times of economic hardship they may well go bankrupt if they can't sell enough games at a high enough price.

Games can be difficult to come by - instead of going into your local W H Smiths or Boots as you might for a computer game, you have to rely on specialist shops. In addition it can be quite hard to find fellow players. Finally, even when you have games and people to play them with, you are subject to a lot of misunderstanding from the general public. This ranges from simple ridicule from schoolfriends to the attacks of fanatical groups like the Moral Majority. If more people were familiar with roleplaying the M M and its allies wouldn't be able to get away with such whopping lies.

So what do we do about this? Well there are some advantages to being a small, close-knit hobby and doubtless many people like it this way, but if we do want to make roleplaying more popular, we have to find ways of getting more people to play the games. That's a glib, simplistic answer. The real question is, how?

Better publicity would be a good start. There is a theory that all publicity is good publicity and to a certain extent that is true. It is better for sales to get bad press than none at all, but good press is still better than bad. Having magazines like this on the stands of the big newsagent chains regularly is helpful in this respect, especially as we are in control of what is said in them. However, such magazines are, to a great extent, only capable of preaching to the converted. *Imagine* magazine did try running a feature for new or potential players (the infamous *Nick Novice* cartoon) but this proved completely unsuccessful. An outsider picking up a roleplaying magazine in a shop will probably have great difficulty understanding what it is all about, and is hardly likely to be converted to our cause.

How about exposure in the mass media, then? There have been quite a few newspaper articles about Steve Jackson and Ian Livingstone, but normally these focus on how successful they have been and how many Porsches they have, rather than on the games. This is partly because journalists like writing about people with lots of Porsches, and partly because they don't understand the games well enough to write about them (or at least find it too much effort to try). The only other newspaper coverage we get is when the latest fanatic attack happens. There are few things newspapers like better than Satanism stories, and when they get one they are not interested in whether it is true or not.

So, newspapers are out. Explaining an obscure new game form does not make good copy and they are mainly interested in sensation. Perhaps we will have more luck with TV. A few years ago a BBC researcher for the arts programme, *Arena*, was sniffing around the hobby, but it turned out that he was only interested in poking fun at us and, when roleplaying turned out to be less crazy than he'd expected, he soon lost interest.

More recently a game of *AD&D* was featured in an episode of BBC2's *Tucker's Luck*. Again this did more harm than good, the roleplayers being presented as boring, overly-serious and obsessed with the minutiae of the vast rulebooks. OK, so this is a very accurate portrayal of some AD&D players, but it is not the sort of thing that makes converts. Unfortunately, it is very much the image that many people have of roleplayers as a whole, and we are unlikely to get any better treatment until we change our image. More of that later, but in the meantime what can we do to help newcomers who have decided to take the plunge and explore the hobby?

As I mentioned above, roleplaying magazines can seen pretty incomprehensible to an outsider, but often they are the very pinnacle of clarity compared to game rulebooks. Games are still being produced with rulebooks that look like a cross between a maths textbook and a legal contract. They should be simple, concise, friendly, and readable.

Some progress is being made. TSR's latest games have been commendably simple; unfortunately it seems like this may have been more a result of cost-cutting than good design as they don't work that well, and one, the *Conan* roleplaying game, is absolutely riddled with errors.

In contrast Mayfair's *DC Heroes* game is a model of elegant design. The company put a lot of effort into helping players get into the game by providing worked examples of play and introductory scenarios. Alas, this was all spoilt by the fact that the designers were more interested in the rules than the game, with the result that it all sounded very sterile. In fact game designers are often a great problem, as they usually try to provide rules to cover everything when they should be giving guidelines for GMs to work things out for themselves. Having spent a lot of time creating a game, the designers find it very difficult to accept that, quite often, the GM will need to throw away the rules and improvise.

One of the attempts at making roleplaying more accessible has been the introduction of the book-format game. This began with the Jackson-Livingstone *Fighting Fantasy* books, which are really more puzzles than roleplaying, and has now blossomed into Corgi's *Dragon Warriors*, a complete role-playing game published as three paperback books. The book format has a lot of advantages. To start with, publishers like Puffin and Corgi already have a good relationship with the high street stores. The fact that the books are easier to find means higher sales almost automatically. Books can also get away with a somewhat more simple (read cheaper) appearance than traditional game rulebooks. So far so good? Well, maybe.

To start with, as I said above, Fighting Fantasy books are hardly roleplaying. Many of the people who buy them are too young to sit down with something as complex as AD&D and make a satisfying game of it,

and many FF fans actually don't like the extra effort required for real roleplaying.

Something like Dragon Warriors may provide a useful bridge between FF and roleplaying if it is simple enough, though it is more difficult to make something look simple in a book because of the smaller size of the page. Overall, however, all FF and DW are doing is gaining better penetration of existing market, ie, people who like (fairly complicated) fantasy games. They are not (yet) opening up any significant new markets.

What it boils down to is a question of image. Roleplaying and fantasy are, at present, inextricably linked in the minds of the general public. It is also generally believed that roleplaying involves very complex rules, takes ages to play and even longer to master. Contrast that with a real best-selling game like *Trivial Pursuit*. We need to show that roleplaying is a general tool which can be applied to other fields, and find new, large markets associated with those fields.

Let us go back to books for the moment. Fighting Fantasy books often appear on the same shelves as SF and fantasy literature because it is assumed that the two appeal to the same audience. But do they? What percentage of Tolkien fans actually play D&D? Indeed, what percentage of FF players graduate to roleplaying? The question here is, do fantasy readers actually want an interactive story, or are they happy to be entertained by the writer?

I believe this to be a very important point, and to be principal reason why TSR's *HeartQuest* and similar Mill & Boon style gamebooks have been such a flop. In fantasy, and even more so in romantic fiction, you know what is going to happen next. If the hero or heroine acted sensibly instead of honourably, or managed to see through the misunderstandings that abound in the plot, nothing would happen. Trying to make a game that appeals to the readers of such books is thus quite difficult. SF and Thrillers are also not so suitable because they often rely on last-minute plot twists that only the author could have forseen and therefore couldn't be worked out by a game player. What we are looking for is a fictional genre in which the readers actually get involved and try to work things out for themselves.

Correct, you've got it in one, detective novels. And just look what turned up at this year's *Toy Fair*.

Toy Fair, by the way, is an excellent place to look for trends that are going to succeed. Unlike *Games Day*, which appeals only to the specialist market, Toy Fairs are for mass retailers. At them you'll find both the buyers for the big chain stores and the owners of small newsagents who have a small stock of toys. This year's Fair was pretty dull, and the one thing that did stand out was detective games.

Waddington's *Cluedo* is being expanded and re-launched and that will doubtless be a big hit over Christmas, but what caught my eye were a couple of small roleplaying companies. The products they had on show were *Gumshoe* and two different *Murder Mystery Party* games.

Gumshoe, as you'll doubtless know by now, does for Sam Spade what *Consulting Detective* did for Sherlock Holmes. Sleuth have really excelled themselves here and the game is well worth the money, both in its own right and as a play-aid for *Call of Cthulhu*. Like Consulting Detective, it is something of a halfway house between Fighting Fantasy and roleplaying. Gumshoe leans a little further over to the roleplaying side but options are still fairly limited. What is important is that, with all the excellent play-aids provided, you do get good atmosphere, and that is what roleplaying is really all about.

Murder Mystery Parties, in contrast, are pure roleplaying. What happens is that you have (or pretend to have) a dinner party at which a murder has been committed. Each player takes the part of one of the guests and they try to find out who did it.

Simple, isn't it? There is no action save for people going in and out of rooms. The characters are all provided. You hardly need any rules at all, and because of this you don't even need a GM. It is roleplaying at its simplest and most elegant.

There were two series of these games on show at the fair. The man from Sleuth had a rather scruffy-looking set which he claimed were the originals but seemed rather uninterested in them. On another stand was *How to Host a Murder* which was much more professionally packaged. Indeed the games had been re-done for the UK, though it is a shame they didn't take the opportunity to put right some of the more crass Americanisms. I mean, how many British aristocrats called Randy do you know? Both these systems should be available soon if they aren't already.

Well, these games seem to be what I was looking for. The question now is, will they sell? To be honest I don't think there will be much in them to appeal to the D&D/AD&D players who make up the bulk of the current roleplaying market. People who like more investigative games like Call of Cthulhu may well be attracted by them, but I very much hope that the major sales will not be to existing roleplayers at all.

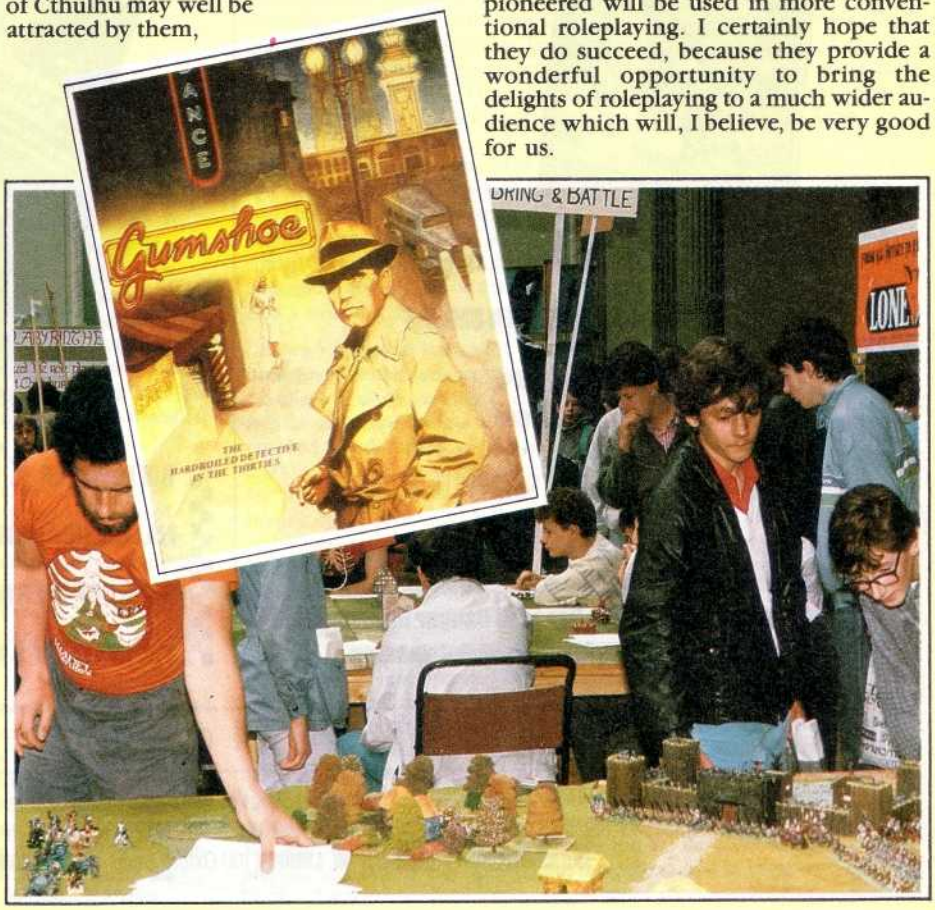
There is a huge market for detective fiction (and at least 50% of it female). It tends to be older and more influential than the fantasy market which will be good for respectability. I don't think it was an accident that Capital Radio picked out How to Host a Murder in its Toy Fair report. If the games can get more good publicity when they are launched they could do very well indeed.

And, as an aside, such things are already succeeding. Believe it or not, live-action detective roleplaying is alive and well and living at some of the best hotels in Britain. Try phoning Gleneagles and asking about *Murder Mystery Weekends*. Personally I'd prefer that to *Treasure Trap* type stuff any day.

There are, of course, a few problems with Murder Mystery Parties. This is, after all, a new form of roleplaying, and look what a mess D&D was when it first came out. One of the big questions concerns the murderer. Is the player whose character did it told? If he is then the rules for him must be different; if he is not how can he be roleplaying?

The other major problem is the price. One game box buys you one scenario which, after one evening's entertainment, is presumably finished with. The *How to Host a Murder* stuff in particular contains some very nice play aids, but all this costs money. What seems to be needed is an expansion pack with lots of scenario ideas and advice on how to make up your own games. But if you do write your own scenario then you must know the plot which means you can't play.

It will be interesting to see how these games develop if they catch on, and whether the techniques they have pioneered will be used in more conventional roleplaying. I certainly hope that they do succeed, because they provide a wonderful opportunity to bring the delights of roleplaying to a much wider audience which will, I believe, be very good for us.



ANCIENT & MODERN

A Scenario for Schizophrenic Roleplayers

by Graham Staplehurst

This scenario involves **two** sets of characters, both of which may be run by the same set of players. Depending on the roleplaying game you usually play, or the system with which you are most familiar and happy, one set of characters will be the Main or Primary Characters and the others will be the Secondary Characters. In the text, characters are additionally referred to as **ancient** or **modern**. This label applies to the **origin** of the characters. The chapters of the adventure are also labelled A or M, but note that this applies to the setting (ancient or modern), rather than the type of characters active in that chapter.

Your first decision in running this scenario concerns the system(s) you choose to use. If Primary Characters are to be drawn from the ancient setting, you should use *AD&D/D&D* or some other fantasy-based roleplaying game. The scenario contains stats for *AD&D* only, but these should be easy to convert into other systems. If the Primary Characters are to be from the modern era, you should use a roleplaying game set in the early 20th Century. The scenario has been devised for use with *Call of Cthulhu*, but other games such as *Indiana Jones RPG* or *Mercenaries, Spies & Private Eyes* would also be suitable.

You must next decide whether the players will actually play both sets of characters. If they do, the scenario gets fairly complicated and only experienced GMs should attempt it. Read through the adventure carefully first to get some idea of how difficult you think it might be. If you decide **not** to play both sets of characters, use the guidelines in the text of the appropriate chapters to keep the players informed of what the Secondary Characters are up to. What would have been the Secondary Player Characters are now NPCs, and should be treated like any other.

Brian Lumley

The scenario is split between two eras in Earth's 'history': one ancient and one modern. The ancient times are based on the writings of Brian Lumley, a British author writing for Arkham House, who publish most of the stories relating to the Cthulhu Mythos. The setting of Lumley's stories is the Primal Continent of Theem'hdra see map pp 32-33, raised and peopled millions of years ago, before even the dinosaurs were known. In those ancient times god-like beings manifested themselves on the earth, magicians and sorcerors did battle with runes and spells, and even great Cthulhu itself was briefly set free from its Elder bonds. In the eons since, Theem'hdra has been sunk and shattered by cataclysms beyond imagination, so that it and all memory of it have been cast down and forgotten.

The second-greatest wizard of those ancient years was one Teh Atht. He was a White Sorceror, and was responsible for constructing a capsule of super-adamatine strength into which he put books and artefacts containing much of the knowledge (magical, historical, geographical, anthropological) of Theem'hdra, that it might be preserved for ever. He cannot have suspected that it would endure so long before being revealed - flung in a lava bomb from the fiery mouth of a volcano in the 20th Century - but this is exactly what happened!

The 20th Century, so many millenia, billenia even, from those ancient times is the modern setting. One might be forgiven for thinking that there was nothing connecting the two eras, for whole continents have marched around the globe in the intervening span of time, and civilisations such as Lemuria and Atlantis have risen and fallen. But two things link the disparate strands of the adventure's settings: the legacy of Teh Atht, and another legacy, much more hideous. And waiting through all time are those horrific, powerful beings of Cthulhu's ilk, sleeping in the earth, imprisoned beneath the seas and watching, quietly watching, from the spaces between the stars.

The Background To The Plot

In the city of Klühn in Theem'hdra a temple has been built. It is known as the Temple of the Secret Gods and its chief priest is the dark and enigmatic Gorgos. Gorgos claims to be protecting the people of Klühn from the Secret Gods who are coming in anger to take their vengeance on the city. In actuality, Gorgos is no priest and not even human. He is a **Thromb** - a demonic being capable of great necromancy and powerful evil. The thromb come from the stars, and wait in other dimensions for the chance to reach a world with life and exploit it. They feed on magical energies which are generated by the incantations, emotions and devotions of their subjects and if they receive sufficient of it, they become immortal. Gorgos' subjects are the 'priests' of his Temple, and with their aid he seeks to call down others of his kin in order that he may rule them, and through them the entire earth. And what chance then for mankind?

But interfering with Gorgos' schemes is Teh Atht - the one man who stays this supernatural invasion. Each night Gorgos whips his priests into a frenzy of worship, and black clouds gather over the Temple of Secret Gods, sending streams of blue-green coruscating light down to feed the thromb. Each day Teh Atht weaves spells to dam the flow of energy and bleed away that which reaches the evil being. Thus Gorgos is frustrated, realising that he will not be able to achieve his designs with Teh Atht still alive. And the White Wizard is too canny and wise to leave himself unprotected ....

So Gorgos has devised a final plan. Final, for it will cost him much of his remaining energy and afterwards he may not have enough to survive. Final also, for he plans to leave this Time where he is known and acted against, and find one where he can be left to his own devices. He has made a study of the arcane science of Time, and having plundered the researches of a dozen wizards has found a spell which can pull things through Time.

Gorgos has cunningly concealed this spell amongst a number of others, so that its purpose is not obvious, in the belief that at some point in the future a greedy and designing warlock will discover the other, power-giving magicks, use the spell and summon his own destruction. With signs and sigils, Gorgos has made an indestructible book, doomed to survive throughout eternity, to be revealed at some time far, far hence from Teh Atht's meddling reach.

Chance - if chance you call it - would have Teh Atht's capsule and Gorgos' book found in the same century, to within a few years of each other. The capsule was discovered by a scholar called Thelred Gustau who would be famous and respected today were it not for his 'find' which has been denounced and debunked as fake and forgery. The book was found initially 5,000 years ago, then buried unread in a tomb to be unearthed by Sir Geoffry Hood, a noted archaeologist. He was an honest and good man, but the finding of the book aged him prematurely, turning him into a recluse, for he understood some of the book and, being unable to destroy it, determined to keep its existence a secret from the world. Details of how Theldred Gusteau found the capsule are on page 30.

However, Hood's wife Louise discovered the book herself. She was a young and vivacious Frenchwoman, half Gypsy and half old nobility, and had dabbled in occult matters before: first astrology, then real black magic. When she found the book, she seized upon the opportunity to make herself powerful, beautiful, irresistible .... immortal. Perhaps she hastened Sir Geoffry's death or maybe it was inevitable - we shall never know. But now Mme Louise Chalbert has a secret covern of colleagues to aid her in her diabolic mechinations. Together they will soon attempt the most powerful magick of all. And in her secluded modern chateau just off the coast of Normandy, a most terrible horror may spring from the darkest past to bring an even blacker future.

Of Things Ancient ....

The ancient part of the scenario is set in Theem'hdra, but you could just as easily locate it in any fantasy world as long as you can persuade your players it is an antecedent of the modern world. Theem'hdra is not so very different from any other fantasy landscape, peopled by various human races. However, there are no dwarf, elf, gnome, hobbit or orcish races on Theem'hdra - the closest being the Suhm-yi, akin to half-elves in many ways.

It is suggested, therefore, that only human and half-human characters be played in this scenario. Characters do not have to be of a very high level, and there are guidelines in the text for tailoring the adventure to fit stronger or weaker parties. However, characters under third level will probably have a very hard time.

.... And Things Modern

Modern characters do not enter the scenario until section A3. The modern characters live in the first half of the 20th Century (1900-1940), in Europe. Any sort of characters would be suitable for the adventure. If you are unfamiliar with games set in this period, you may wish to simply improvise a system, or relegate this section of the adventure to background information to be explained to the players as you go along. You may wish to have players play characters representing their own relatives (eg, parents or grandparents) who were alive at the time. Otherwise normal characters from an appropriate game system should be used.

A Note On Systems

It is very easy to get confused when switching between systems in this scenario. It is therefore recommended that you adopt one of the following policies with regard to systems:

i) One system is used throughout the entire game. This is the obvious choice if you are only running one set of characters and merely story-telling the parts of the Secondary Characters.

ii) One system is used for each set of characters, no matter which era they are currently in. For example, when the ancient characters are getting to Rosedale over the moors, use *AD&D* stats for encounters. This is the preferred modus operandi adopted throughout this scenario.

iii) One system is used for each location/era. Thus when modern characters visit Theem'hdra, they have to cope with reality as expressed by the *AD&D* rules system. This approach may appeal to more experienced GMs and players.

The full potential of this adventure will only be realised if your players can cope with running parallel characters in parallel systems. The more confident you are that this is the case, the more you may wish to flesh out the encounters detailed, so that each set of characters goes through a full-length adventure of their own. It would be possible to attach this adventure to an existing campaign, although this will be much easier when this is a *Call of Cthulhu* 1920-30s campaign.

In any case, the GM should flesh out sections of this adventure with encounters appropriate to the course of the story. There are so many possibilities for - say - sword-swinging fighters in 1920s France, that this module could not cope with them all. GMs will need to be flexible, fast-thinking and creative.

Theem'hdra

Theem'hdra is of volcanic origin. Two volcanoes are mentioned in Teh Atht's manuscripts, both active in his time, but the information available to characters from the modern era is based largely on what Thelred

Gustau remembers of the map from his golden box; in that and in the photographs, however poor, which he managed to obtain before the parchment map disintegrated.

From Gustau's reproduction (see page 32) it can be seen that central Theem'hdra is a vast inland sea, almost circular, of about five hundred miles in diameter and ringed by the Great Circle Mountains. South-west of this inner ocean and within the surrounding range lies a mighty volcano which is in fact a secondary cone, still quietly active and now and then disturbingly grumbly. Surely the throat of the **original** volcano is now the mighty inner sea itself, and the crater walls, eroded by winds, rains and tremors of a young planet, is that same Great Circle?

But what a volcano that must have been! A fire-spewing cauldron five hundred miles across: Krakatoa itself would be the merest squib by comparison! Thus, in what was probably the most violent of all primal convulsions, Theem'hdra was born.

The Western Coasts

On a line due west of the inner sea's centre lies the continent's second active volcano, an island cone standing off in the Unknown Ocean. This volcano, in its birthing, brought down and buried beneath a lava plain the city of Buhr-esh, which knew its heyday when Klühn, the modern capital on the eastern coast almost three thousand miles away, was merely a fishing village. Nevertheless, and while Buhr-esh is to Klühn what Ur is to, say, modern Cairo, legends of Buhr-esh came down to Teh Atht in his wizardly apartments overlooking Klühn's great bay, and he dutifully recorded them in his runebooks.

At the north-westerly extreme of the continent is a land of fjords and lochs and chilly wastes. Nomadic woolly mammoths wander the great plains to the west of this region, hunted by towering white savages who - while there are many individual tribes and families - generally go under the name of Northmen. More commonly, however, they are known as barbarians!

The true Northern Barbarian is easily recognised; by his massive strength, his lightly-browned skin, his love of soft women and hard drink, his rapidly alternating moods (between soaring high spirits and deepest, darkest depression), his dread of sorcery, and by the distinctive mane of hair he wears, short and bristly, from nape of neck to base of spine.

Fishermen famed for their hunting of the great whales, sailors crafted in boat-building, warriors dreaded for the sheer madness of their beserker-rages - yes, and traders too, whose pelts and ivory are valued highly in Khrissa and Thandopolis - the Northmen are colourful, heroic characters, with a whole-hearted love of piratical adventurings and tall-tale-telling and song-singing. They are also wanderers who may be found far from their chill homeland, in almost every part of Theem'hdra.

Amidst the inner foothills of the western range is mystery. Mystery in the shape of massive stone cubes, featureless blocks with sides hundreds of feet long, and which are fabled to be the long-vacated houses of the world's first race, which was not human but came down to Earth from the stars in Theem'hdra's pre-history.

The North

Three hundred miles east of the mammoth plains, at the mouth of the Greater Marl River, lies a cold and lonely city of basalt slabs: Khrissa. Its gaunt, sparsely-clad priests are a race aside from the majority of Theem'hdra's peoples. Tall and thin they are, bald-pated and shaven of all bodily hair; and equally austere their lives, for their sole task in life would seem to be the sending of prayers to their many gods that the Ice Barrier to the north might encroach no closer to the northern shores of Theem'hdra. In the Year of the White Whales - when the ice only stopped after mounting the Thousand Mile Reef, while to the east it cast its creeping frosty-silver cloak about the feet of Tharamoon - Khrissa's priests sacrificed no less than three hundred of their women in order to still the deadly white advance. Woe betide any stranger in Khrissa when the ice crackles out of the north and winter snows drift deep and ominous!

North-east of Khrissa, at the most northerly point of the mainland, Tharamoon the Mountain Island rises silent, forbidding and forbidden, ten miles out in the Chill Sea. Atop the highest needle peak a massive castle of grey stone glooms against greyer skies. Its one-time inhabitant,

Mylakhrion the Elder, is long dead and blown as dust in the wind, but still the island lies vacant; for no man would tempt the monstrous magicks and curses Mylakhrion doubtless called down upon that blasted rock in his last days.

Between the Frostlands and Klühn is Arlyeh, island of nameless ruins in mid-ocean. In some bottomless crypt, the most hideous of all dark forces lies chained by rune and spell of Elder God.... in the House of Cthulhu.

The Frostlands are not part of the Primal Continent, and Yaht-Haal, the Silver City at the edge of the Frostlands is the only city beyond the confines of the Continent proper known to the people of Theem'hdra. Here too priests and wizardlings keep the ice away with their chants and spell-spinning, but unlike the people of Khrissa, Yaht-Haal's folk are gentle, fur-clad folk who harmed none and loved all.

Great mysteries there are in many parts of Theem'hdra, aye, and mystery too in the Black Isle, standing dark and still in a subsidiary lake of the Inner Sea to the north-east; but of that place, so far, we know nothing except that it is there....

The Western Coasts

North of the Bay of Monsters, between the mighty River Luhr and the Great Eastern Peaks, lies the Steepes of Hrossa where dwell the fierce Hrossaks. Tremendously skilled riders of fearsome lizard mounts, warriors almost without peer, the Hrossaks feud intermittently with the armies of massive-walled Grypha at the mouth of the Luhr, and with the Yhemni in their coastal forests. Other than the occasional raid or skirmish, however, the bronze Hrossaks are content to live at peace in their steppes where they farm and pride themselves in practising the arts of war. There also they breed their lizard herds, providing leather and meat and sport a-plenty. The River Luhr is sacred to them and they will not cross it.

Across the Luhr to the west, two hundred and fifty miles away ,rise the foothills of the Great Circle Mountains, within which, to the east of the Inner Sea, oozes the nightmarish Marsh of Slugs - all ten thousand square miles of it.

Almost eight hundred miles south of Klühn - across the Luhr and several smaller rivers, surrounded by dense coastal forest - lies the city of Yhemnis. It is a splendidly barbaric city of gold, ivory and ironwood, home and citadel of swart Yhemni slavers and pirates. East again, across the stormy Straits of Yhem and eighty sea-miles distant, the jungle island of Shadarabar (with Shad, its capital, squarely facing Yhemnis on the mainland) is also home to Yhemni tribes. Mercifully these dark brown peoples are as often at each others throats as at war with the rest of the Primal Continent's more civilised peoples.

The Inner Sea

Central in the enclosed sea which was once the throat of a volcano, like green jewels strewn on a mantle of beautiful blue, the Inner Isles reach up their lava mountains to touch the sky. Here, rumour has it, dwells a tall, slender, comb-headed race of silver-grey beings who are not entirely human. Their houses are wooden and nestle on the slopes of their mountains; their needs are simple and all supplied by the islands themselves and the teeming sea; their ways are gentle, even though they have strengths not immediately apparent, and their lives are ones of quiet and peaceful contemplation.

They are called the Suhm-yi, which means "the Rarely Seen", and their existence is still doubted in many quarters. They are said to have the finest minds in all Theem'hdra and senses that reach beyond the normal range of those we know.

The South

Little is known of the south of the continent. The south-westerly extreme is known as the Paps of Mam, after the Mother of Gods, Mam.

A1 : CAPTURE

The introduction for the ancient characters will take place in their own time. The first any of them will know of the hideous things they are to be drawn into is when their sleep is rudely interrupted in the middle of the night. If they are sleeping indoors, the attackers will simply burst windows, shutters and doors down and rush at the characters. If the party have left a watch, the invisible raiders will surprise them on a 1-4 (d6), or a 1-2 (d6) if the watchers can *see invisible*. The raiding party is composed of the following:

Braganna - Human, MU5; hp 16; No AT 1; D 2-5; Al LE; AC 7; Move 12" (flying); THACO 19; S17 (+1/+1), I14, W13, D10, Co15 (+1), Ch11; **dagger +1** (to hit), **bracers of defence AC 7, potion of gaseous form**; Spells: **charm person** (x2), **magic missile, sleep, invisibility★, detect invisibility, flying★** (★ Indicates spell already used)

2 Invisible Stalkers (MM p55) - HD 8; hp 32,39; No AT 1; D 4-16; Al N; AC 3; Move 12"; THACO 12; Int High; Size L.

2+ Gargoyles (MM p42) - HD 4; hp 25 each; No AT 4; D 1-3/1-3/1-6/1-4; Al CE; AC 5+; Move 9"/15"; Int Low; Size M; SD +1 weapons to hit (+ -4 to hit whilst invisible)

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There may be more than two gargoyles if you wish, according to the size and strength of the party. All will have been made invisible before leaving the Temple. Braganna will not use his **invisibility** until he is certain of the characters' location. The raiders' tactics will be to try and capture characters who are obviously unprepared, eg, those sleeping or without weapons. If they make a successful grappling attack, a gargoyle or stalker can bear a character into the air to a height of at least 50', so that any threats to the raiders will be countered by the likely fate of a character falling such a distance. Braganna will stay back from the melee, casting spells from a safe distance. As soon as each monster has a character (or is slain) Braganna will depart, the raiders following. The monsters will head back to the courtyard in the Merchant Quarter (see A2 below) flying high through the air; Braganna will fly to a swift horse he has hidden nearby and ride to the Temple.

If at all possible, Braganna *should* be revealed at some point during the melee; perhaps he has to strike a blow which negates his **invisibility**, or use an offensive spell. The characters will then see that he has the striking yellow robes of the priests of the Temple of Secret Gods, and will have a clue as to where those kidnapped have been taken. Of course, if all the party is captured, there is no need for this.

The time it takes to get to the courtyard in Klühn should not be more than half the night, but will obviously depend on how close you let the characters get before springing the next surprise on them.

A2 : IN THE DUNGEONS

If any characters were *not* captured in the first raid (see A1) they are initially free to try and help rescue their colleagues. Gorgos will have one of his priests secretly monitoring them at all times however, using magical means (such as scrying with a **crystal ball**) if necessary. If they are obviously planning to approach the Temple, he will not hinder them but will set a trap to imprison them with the others. If they appear to have given up on their fellows, he will send a priest after them incognito with a powerful poison. The priest will shadow the characters until they have a meal at an inn or similar place, where he will bribe/scare the owner into letting him poison their food. He will then drop a scroll where they will find it, saying that they have been poisoned with a drug that will infallibly kill them within 2 days unless they seek the antidote ... from Gorgos! The characters are allowed a saving throw vs poison (at -8, or -10 for non-humans) if the time limit is allowed to elapse.

If the characters have not presented the thief-priest with an opportunity to use his drug within 6 days, he will instead drop a scroll from Gorgos threatening the lives of their companions unless they give themselves up.

Trezond - Human, T3; hp 15; No AT 1; D by weapon; Al NE; AC 4; Move 12"; THACO 20★; S15, I13, W10, D18 (-4), Co15 (+1), Ch15; broadsword, leather armour, sling (+3 to hit with DEX), 6 throwing daggers (+3 to hit with DEX), poison (see above), **potion of speed**.

Captured characters will see little of the Temple. To start off with, the raiders will make sure that those kidnapped are unconscious while they are being carried across the city, although clever characters could fake this and dupe their captors. Moreover, the monsters carrying the lost characters will land in a nondescript courtyard closed on all sides by typical Klühnish buildings, and the adventurers are then hustled or carried down a trapdoor stair which connects with an underground passage to the Temple.

The courtyard is in the Merchant Quarter of Klühn and none of the buildings are occupied - three sides are warehouses, the fourth offices and shops. No-one will remark on the strange aerial convoy. The Temple stands uphill from the Merchant Quarter about a ½ mile away, surrounded by its own gardens.

The kidnapped characters are stripped of almost all their clothes and any adornments or equipment. All such items are stored in a secure room in the Temple, inaccessible for all practical purposes in this scenario, unless the character has magical abilities.

The characters are then thrown together in a cell about 15' square and 10' high, strewn with old straw and muck. In one corner is a small (6" across) hole in the floor that serves as a latrine. The door to the cell is iron-reinforced wood and very stout - any attempt to force it will be at half normal chances. The door is locked and barred on the outside, there being no keyhole on the inside to pick, or unlock. The only light comes from thin cracks around the door.

Outside the cell is a 20-85-30' room manned by four guards at a time (it will be quite easy for quiet parties to estimate the number of guards, as they are not silent!):

4 Guards - Human; F3; hp 24; No AT 1; D by weapon; Al E; AC 5; Move 9"; THACO 18; S16 (+1), I12, W12, D14, Co15 (+1), Ch9; longsword *or* flail, heavy crossbow with 6 poisoned bolts - save vs poison at -2 or paralysed for 20-CON hours.

Each guard is clad in chainmail and carries either an iron flail or a longsword. All also have to hand a heavy crossbow and a supply of 12 bolts; six are ordinary, the other six are also tipped with a strong nerve poison designed to incapacitate anyone attempting to escape. The room is lit by two flaming torches on each wall. There is a table in the centre of the room piled with dirty plates and wooden cups. Apart from the characters' cell (a) there are four others very similar. Only (b) and (c) are occupied.

In cell (b) is **Ikrish Sarn** of Hubriss, a sorceror of no small powers who was trapped by Gorgos whilst trying to penetrate the secret mazes of the Temple and thwart Gorgos' evil plans. He has languished here for three years and the cell is magically 'insulated' by Gorgos so that none can detect his presence. Ikrish appears thin and bedraggled; he wears a grubby linen shift and has long, lice-infested hair and discoloured fingernails while his eyes are sunken and dull. He might be mistaken at first for some revolting undead creature, but is utterly helpless, and will be so for at least an hour if released from his cell and given no assistance. In the figures below, those in (brackets) are those Ikrish would have if fully recovered:

Ikrish Sarn - Human; MU10; hp 6 (29); %AT 0 (1); D (by weapon); Al NG; AC 10; Move 6" (9"); THACO 19; S6 (8), I12 (17), W14, D10 (12), Co7 (14), Ch3 (11)

Ikrish Sarn is a good friend of Teh Atht, which is why Gorgos wants to keep him alive and yet hidden from the White Sorceror's view. If Ikrish Sarn is released from his captivity by the characters, he will soon remember that Teh Atht has a number of communication devices in his Tower for use in emergencies, and he will be able to recite a short incantation which will put them in contact with Teh Atht and seek his aid.

In cell (c) is a problem. One of Gorgos' yellow-robed priests, a minor magic-user, accidentally slew a victim he was supposed to be torturing and the evil circumstances of the man's death have turned him into a wight. The wight rises each time the moon rises and will not rest until the unfortunate priest dies. Having 'killed' the creature twice after several losses of their own, the guards have decided to leave it in the cell where it is out of harm's way. The wight will attack anyone or anything in an attempt to get out of the cell area and through the Temple area, where it will create havoc for a short while before finding and killing the hapless priest/magic-user.

Wight (MM p100) - HD 4+3; hp 30; No AT 1; D 1-4 +*level drain*; Al LE; AC 5; Move 12"; THACO 15; Int Ave; Size M; SD silver/magic weapons to hit, immune to mind-affecting spells.

The cell area is some distance from the Temple although the two are connected by a passage and stairway. The guards are rotated every six hours so characters should have a good chance of escaping if they get out of the cell. Unless influenced by magic, the guards will not open the door under any circumstances (other than an obvious threat to the prisoners' lives, such as flames and smoke coming under the door). The characters are fed once every 24 hours, thin slops being pushed under a tiny flap at the base of the door (less than 6" high) in wooden bowls. The wood is strong enough to make a dagger out of by smashing it and sharpening it on the stones, but it will blunt after one strike (-2 to hit, -6 vs metal armour). Of course, magic-users may have some spells left remembered and clerics will be able to regain a full complement after resting. The walls and floor of the cell are too hard to tunnel through with any normal means available to the characters.

At the top of the stair leading from the cell area to the passageway connecting with the Temple and the secret courtyard entrance is a **magic mouth** alarm which will warn the guards at both ends. The secret trapdoor exit can be sealed with a huge counterweighted block of stone - should the characters seek to leave that way - whilst many guards and priests will bar the Temple end and have time to set traps, prepare spells etc, if the alarm is heard. Within 5 minutes, Gorgos himself will appear, taking command of the situation if necessary, and will see that the characters are recaptured.

If Ikrish Sarn has been released and has been allowed to contact Teh Atht (the party may feel a little apprehensive about this strange man muttering incantations), Teh Atht will react quickly, gathering a special scroll and **teleporting** himself and the communication device to the cells. Because he has the communication device, there is no chance for error as if Ikrish Sarn is allowed to concentrate without being disturbed (for example, by guards). Teh Atht will then call all the characters back to the cells and will cast the spell on the special scroll - a **mass dimension door** that will take them all out to a sanctuary a friend of his keeps prepared. Note that Teh Atht will not want to hang around and face Gorgos on his own territory and so if characters dawdle or prevaricate, they may miss this opportunity to escape.

At the sanctuary, Teh Atht will have some means of transport available: a large disguised cart if there are many people to be rescued, otherwise his large **carpet of flying** which can carry himself and up to three others. Teh Atht naturally has access to all sorts of spells to protect them on the way back to his Tower.

A3 : THE DREAM-SENDER

Teh Atht has met at least some of the PCs at this stage and arranges to contact any others as soon as possible through his many friends in and around the city. Note that non-kidnapped characters may have gone to Teh Atht as a source of aid in releasing their comrades from prison in the first place (an NPC might suggest this). He seeks them out as soon as possible and questions the characters at length about their recent activities, their possessions etc, in an attempt to discover why Gorgos should want to capture them and hold them. Nothing the players can say will help, of course, but the GM may provide some red herrings.

Whilst this procedure is going on, Teh Atht will naturally be keeping the characters as safe as possible in his Tower. If any of them should stray outside without his protection, there is a 10% cumulative chance per occurence that Gorgos has something waiting for them, such as an invisible stalker or giant eagle circling far overhead.

After a few days, a messenger-bat arrives from a sorceror friend of Teh Atht's with news that explains Gorgos's future plans. The bat is injured and Teh Atht surmises that it has come a long way - travelling for several weeks - for the wizard who sent it is now dead at the hand of Gorgos. The message it carries hints at a great discovery relating to the arcane science of controlling Time with magical energies. The wizard, Imlaht the Teacher, had been interested in the science from an archaeologist's standpoint, and had been seeking ways of retrieving lost objects from the past. The message implies he has found or devised a spell to do just that.

Teh Atht shares this information with the PCs. They should infer that Gorgos is going to attempt to summon some great instrument or being of power from the past, in order to defeat Teh Atht. Fortunately, Imlaht had shared much of his researches with Teh Atht in the past and so the latter knows something of the nature of Time and the magicks associated with it. He suggests that he uses a **timeseeking** spell in order to find out what Gorgos is trying to dredge up from the dark and murky past. This spell works in much the same way as an **astral spell** (*PH*, p52), but the projected body moves through normal space and time, able to observe it. It also makes any distortions in the Stream of Time very noticeable, and they can be easily followed.

Teh Atht has to go into a trance for 36 hours to make his temporal journey. During this time, the Tower is attacked by a force sent by Gorgos. If the characters have lost equipment in the kidnapping, Teh Atht will re-supply them, even allowing MUs access to appropriate spell books, although he will not trust them with anything other than a few minor magic items. Any armour and weapons are allowed.

The attack starts at the main door of the Tower, which is demolished by a powerful spell from a scroll Gorgos has given to his minions. Actually, there is no threat to either the characters or Teh Atht, since the wizard's magical protections will still ward off any attackers, but the characters will probably get alarmed and their players should be made to think that something awful is about to happen. If the characters venture down from the upper part of the Tower to the ground floor, they will see the attackers glowering in the doorway:

Githyanki Knight (FF p43) - "Anti-Paladin"8; hp 67; No AT 1; D by weapon; Al LE; AC 1; Move 12"; THACO 9; S17 (+1/+1), I17, W15, D16 (-2), Co17 (+3), Ch16; Size M; SA silver sword, psionics (if appropriate); plate mail, **oil of etherealness, medallion of ESP**

2 Githyanki Gish (FF p43) - F4/MU4; hp 32; No AT 1; D by weapon; Al LE; AC 1; Move 12"; THAC0 16; S16 (+1), I13, W11, D16 (-2), Co16 (+2-85-½) ,Ch14; SA **two-handed sword +1**, psionics (if appropriate); plate mail, slings

Spells:
(i) **affect normal fires, dancing lights, magic missile, pyrotechnics, scare**
(ii) **sleep, enlarge, charm person, levitate, stinking cloud**

Fire Elemental (MM p38) - HD 16; hp 71; No AT 1; D 3-24; Al N; AC 2; Move 12"; THAC0 7; Int Low; Size L; SA fire; SD +2 weapons to hit

If any character crosses the threshold to the Tower, they will be immediately attacked, and they will also break one of the major bonds of protection Teh Atht has set about the Tower. This will allow the monsters access to the lowest 2 floors. They will still be unable to get at the staterooms on the upper floors where the characters have their quarters just below those of Teh Atht, so there is no direct threat to either them or the wizard. Otherwise, the Githyanki inscribe circles on the ground outside and appear to prepare some horrific enchantment or black magic, but this is merely an attempt to lure the characters outside. The GM should balance this encounter so that the PCs are only in real danger if they behave very rashly, but should pressure them them into believing they need to defend themselves.

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Teh Atht's Tower

Teh Atht's Tower stands on a rocky bluff overlooking Klühn from some distance.

The Tower has 16 floors in all. The ground floor and first floor are both an imposing 25' tall, and all the other floors have 10' ceilings, making the Tower almost 200' tall altogether. The Tower measures 50' in diameter at the base and tapers to just 10' across on the 15th floor where Teh Atht has his observatory. The bottom two floors are grand halls; the next three are servants' rooms; above these are 6 floors of guest apartments and storage rooms. The 11th floor is Teh Atht's own living room, the 12th his bedroom and the 13th his library. The 14th floor is only accessible to Teh Atht himself and contains his laboratory and study. All the stairs in the Tower have a permanent levitation of a mild sort cast on them so that going up or down is both very easy and very safe.

The monsters cannot progress beyond the Grand Hall of the first floor; neither can they affect the structural integrity of the Tower. Both the Grand Halls are lavishly decorated and have hanging tapestries, murals and paintings on the walls, although there are no windows. The entire Tower is lit by **continual light**. Around the walls are sideboards and cabinets displaying *objets d'art* and items of historical or cultural significance: a golden statuette of the Slug God of the N'dolas; a fan of Hrossak halberd-lances, their razor-sharp heads carved with all manner of delicate figures; engraved ivory figurines from frozen Khrissa; a greenish sigil-stone from dark Arlyeh; incredibly fine silverware from Yaht-Haal, the Silver City at the edge of the Frostlands; all these and more from across thousands of leagues and the whole span of Theem'hdra, all locked in magical display cupboards to awe Teh Atht's guests with a show and exhibition rivalling that of any of the continent's Kings and High Priests.

Also in the Halls are seats and divans around the walls between the cabinets, with small tables so that visitors may be entertained without ceremony as befits them. The Grand Hall of the first floor is also used for larger affairs, now rather infrequent, and there is a large fire-pit in the centre around which collapsing tables (stored in the upper rooms) are set.

ARCTIC CIRCLE
Slotavden
Snasa
Trondheim
0
500
Scale in Kilometers
NORWAY
NORTH SEA
BRITAIN
Newcastle
Pickering
London
GERMANY
Plzen
ENGLISH CHANNEL
ÎLE CASSON
ST. BRIEUC
FRANCE
GREAT ICE BARRIER
THE FROSTLANDS
DAHT-HAAL (SILVER CITY)
THE CHILL SEA
THARAMOON
N
REEF OF GREAT WHALES
Arlyen
BAY OF KLUHN
DESERT OF SHEB
MT OF ANCIENT
KLUHN
TEETH OF YIB
MAMMOTH PLAINS
GREATER MARL
Khrissa
PIPHRA
ORBIQUITIN CASTLE
R. LOHR
UNKNOWN OCEAN
Hjarpon
LESSER MARL
MTS OF LOHMI
CHLANGI
EASTERN PEAKS
HUMGURSS
EASTERN OCEAN
FJORDS & LOCKS
Ruined keeps
Lost City
RIVER THAND
INNER ISLES
GREAT DEPTHS
BLACK ISLE
DESERT OF P11
CIRCLE MTS
NAMELESS DESERT
GT EASTERN PEAKS
STEPPES OF HROSSA
THANDOPOLIS
BHUR-ESH
VOLCANO ISLE
GREAT ROC PASS
SECONDARY CONE-ACTIVE
WOOD & GRASS LANDS
PLAINS
RIVER LOHR
DHEMNIS
STRAITS OF THEM
SHAN
SHADARABAR
Scrublands
COASTAL FOREST
GRYPHA
Bay of monsters
PAPS OF MAM
PLAINS
SOUTHERN OCEAN
THINHIA
THEEM'HDRA

KLÜHN
Teh Athl's Tower
Temple of the Secret Gods
Sailor's Quarter
Merchant's Quarter
Bay of Klühn
Harbour
City Boundary
20' Contour
Canal
Roadway
City Quarter
0
¼
½
Scale in miles
To the Temple
To the Merchant's Quarter
D
c
20' x 30'
a
b
THE TEMPLE DUNGEONS
Tower
ÎLE CASSON
Chateau Casson
beach
Jetty
Guardhouse
rocks
0
100
Scale in yards

Two sets of stairs lead up from the ground floor, curving around the walls. A single flight leads up to the divided second floor and so on.

Teh Atht's Journey

When Teh Atht awakens from his trance, he has the following information. You may wish to read out the passage as Teh Atht speaks it:

"This is dark news; disturbing and unlooked for. Gorgos seeks to tamper with Time like no **thing** has done before, or ever will, if my reading of the Stream of Time is correct. I set out to seek what Gorgos looked for in the Past; I swam in the turbulent Stream, buffeted and thrown off course ever and anon. But no sign, wave or ripple of Gorgos's magic could I discover. Almost I despaired, thinking he had found some way to mask his movements in that crystal flow.

"Then I swam back to this time, and just as I was about to clamber from the Stream and return to my body which, thank Gleeth, you have preserved, I espied something amiss in the Future. Then I realised that if I went just a little way into the Future, I should be able to find traces of Gorgos's entrance to the Stream, and perhaps even find a way to prevent that entrance. Barely had I thought this when the Stream bore me to the very spot, which was muddied and swirling in a distraught eddy. For a while I was as confused as the flow of Time, before I realised that **Something** was forcing its way **up** the Stream. It was dark, blacker than pitch and it writhed in a grotesque and unnerving manner, as if uncomfortable in the Stream of Time and irritated by its beautiful clarity. Whatever it was, it seemed not **of** Time but almost the negation of it, a substance wholly of magic and unnature.

"At the end of this snaking, necrotic limb was a grasping hook or grapple, continuously twitching, opening and closing. I knew it came for Gorgos, and that ultimately it was of his doing, for there is nothing else in our time it could want. I determined to seek out what monstrous body had sent forth its questing member to reach straight through Time in search of an ancient Necromancer. As I passed the limb's end, the digits expanded and blindly groped in my direction, but I evaded it and a fortunate bore, the flux of some great event yet to happen, carried me past it to safety. So, long I journeyed down the current, alongside the macabre, numinous tentacle. Eventually, looming in the Future, I saw the Body of the limb. And loom it did, almost blocking the entire Stream of Time with its great bulk. But the flow of Time did not seem to halt for it, and then I grew more afraid than I have ever been - I, the greatest living sorceror of Theem'hdra.

"The **Thing** was absorbing the Stream of Time, and would soon engulf it all and bring about the **End**. Fortunately, there were still trickles and rivulets passing around the Thing and much more dammed in front of it, for to engorge a Universe from Beginning to End must be a feat even for Great Ones such as this. I slipped to the side of the Stream and, passing along one of the rivulets and dwarfed beside its bulk, I saw its connection with the Material Plane and penetrated through in my shadowy, **Timeseeking** form.

"There I saw the evil ones responsible for this abhorrence. Thirteen they were in number, led by a sorceress clad in black and gold, beautiful and wild. Before her was a book, a Tome such as only Gorgos could have created, and from the book she was chanting a spell of hideous power. They were summoning Gorgos to their own time, and they were summoning him in the name of the **thromb**! That name I shall not forget easily: the thromb. A race from the cold stars, demons from the deep, dark spaces between, spawn of the horrors beyond the Rim. And if that Thing did not find Gorgos soon, it would surely engulf all the Planes through all of Time ....

"I departed and plunged back into the Stream of Time. By now, there were all manner of dangerous currents flowing in the Stream, and I was pulled and tossed like an autumn leaf in a swollen brook. I had to fight the torrent of Time and the threshing of that gruesome member, and no easy fight was it. I was forced to rest at the side of the Stream and there I noticed a strange phenomenon. Clustering to the side were several strands of the Stream, solidified and hardened into crystalline wires. Thin they were, yet pure and strong-looking, and loosely woven together in a sort of cable. Each strand seemed to loop out into the Stream and then return to pierce the wall that separated the Material Worlds from this Timeless flow. With trepidation I reached for this support, thinking to use it as a banister up the Stair of the Past, and despite its seeming fragility, the strand I grasped held firm. Soon I was easily pulling myself up that troubled river which bore all the woes of the World, switching from one strand to another when they occasionally diappeared into the wall.

"But the final revalation is yet to come! I passed up the tentacle's whole length ere it had reached Gorgos, but I fear that moment might not be too far hence. As I approached the spot I had marked as my departure point, I realised that all the strands were merging and ending at that very nexus. I forced my projected form through the wall of Time into this very room. Casting a **spell of seeing** I perceived the strands of the Stream of Time as they passed through the wall as if pulled like threads in a gigantic needle: and to each one of you was a thread attached.

"Perhaps it is the Web of Fate at work or some other force, but you seem inextricably linked with that time in the Future where Gorgos intends to be carried. And at the other end of those threads, so many thousands, mayhap millions of generations from now, your descendants will need your assistance if their time and ours is to survive. For the Ritual can be interrupted and Gorgos's plan foiled, if we can but warn those descendants of yours."

After this tale, Teh Atht eats three meals all at once and then is fit again. He starts investigating ways of sending a warning to the Modern characters, going over volumes of correspondence on the subject from Imlaht the Teacher. PC magic-users may wish to help him in this search. This will take 4 days (less one day for every 5 levels of MU aiding him), by which time he will have found a spell Imlaht used for listening to the Past with, which could be adapted for sending a message into the Future. You may require that some peculiar ingredient is needed for the spell which the PCs have to go and find.

When all the preparations are made, Teh Atht has each character carve a small boat complete with mast and sail: these vessels will carry dream-messages down the Stream of Time once attached to the crystalline strands. The messages are designed to pervade the subject's unconscious mind during sleep (the easiest time), and the Ancient characters need to be in a trance-state as well. Teh Atht also makes one more timeseeking trip to follow the book Gorgos sent down the ages. This trip is much shorter as he knows what he is doing and has a simple mission. He discovers that the Tome was found by the husband of the witch in a prehistoric tomb. A possibility for the ambitious GM would be to have Teh Atht send the PCs on this latter journey, in which case their first visit to the Future is accelerated.

M1 : WITCH-HUNT

The adventure starts here for the Modern characters. If players are running both modern and ancient characters, they will already know the events that have taken place in the past. Having received the dream-message, they will feel compelled to meet on the lawns of the Palace of Westminster, seat of the British parliament. Some have travelled a long way, others not so far, but as the famous sound of Big Ben striking twelve o'clock rings out across the Thames, each member of the party instinctively knows the others.

Where players are running modern characters only, the GM should tell them that this compulsion has come in the form of strange dreams over the past days or maybe weeks (depending on how long the characters had to travel to arrive here). Warnings, portents of doom, strange messages indeed, have meant none of them have had a good night's sleep recently. The GM should reveal the outline of sections A1-3 as if they were dreams the modern character have had (you may wish to impose a SAN roll with a bonus equal to the highest INT in the party; failure indicates loss of 1d6 SAN).

The following common facts are established:

1. A person claiming to be an incredibly ancient ancestor has contacted them through the power of magic to warn them of a dire threat to the world heralding from their own ancient era.
2. The threat is in the form of a hideous alien being called a **thromb** which has worshippers in this modern time who are summoning it through Time. The thromb has incredible magic powers which it will use to dominate the world and possibly call down more of its kin from the dark spaces between the stars.
3. The worshippers are led by a woman, whose name is unknown but whose face has been implanted in the modern characters' memories by their ancient counterparts. The woman possesses a tome of magic discovered by her husband who was investigating a prehistoric tomb. His face is also shown to them, as is an idea of the house he and his warlock-wife live in (*note: the characters will not know whether the husband is alive or not; he was not one of the coven members*).

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The characters should be persuaded to start discovering the identity of the couple as soon as possible. Areas of approach include archaeology, architecture, newspapers and so on. If any of the characters have artistic or drawing skills, they will be able to reproduce a picture of the woman which will greatly assist them.

The couple are Sir Geoffry and Lady Louise Hood. Sir Geoffry has been dead for 5 years but his wife is still alive, although now she has reverted to her maiden name: Chalbert. Their residence is a unique Le Corbusier chateau located on the French isle of Casson, just off the coast of Normandy (near the Channel Islands), close to the port of St Brieuc.

Friends of Sir Geoffry in archaeological circles can tell characters of his withdrawal from the field some years before his death, following a famous dig at a prehistoric burial site in the Taurus Mountains in Turkey. Before that time he had been a successful, rich and popular man, respected by his peers and a notable authority on ancient civilisations. Thereafter, he became a complete recluse, living on his own private island in the Channel and receiving no visitors, although his wife made frequent trips to London and Paris. No-one ever discovered what made him turn from such an extroverted and lively man into a solitary and distant character.

The extremely modern chateau at St Brieuc was built eight years ago on a special commission from Sir Geoffry, the plans being drawn up by the famous architect Le Corbusier. It is a peculiar building, like a box of white concrete and glass jutting out from the side of the hill overlooking a rocky bay. Rounded pillars and planes project from it and divide it into an indeterminate number of compartments; on a sunny day the windows seem to dazzle like the facets on a diamond and defy the viewer a 'total' picture of the house.

Lady Louise now calls herself Madame Chalbert and often entertains at her fascinating chateau. She has a reputation for dabbling in the occult, and is moderately famous in London and Paris as a spirit medium, hostess and patroness. She has written two monographs on astrology and the spirit world, but nothing more recent than her husband's death. Less polite sources may also inform characters that she is rumoured to have had a number of lovers in both French and English society, some of them reputedly quite powerful members of the government or the police.

As GM, you might like the characters to come across an article by Thelred Gustau containing much of the information in the section entitled **Thelred Gustau's Introduction**, published before he was ridiculed and later adapted as a sensationalist article in an occult magazine. The magazine also features an interview with Mme Chalbert. The article has been reprinted in several journals and even one popular daily newspaper, but has always been dismissed as bunkum. The publishers of the magazine can supply Gustau's address:

Toughton Hall
Rosedale Abbey
North Yorkshire

The tiny village of Rosedale Abbey is about 8 miles northwest of the market town of Pickering on the North York Moors.

M2 : CHATEAU CASSON

Once they have established who the woman in the dream is, the modern characters will know they must try and unmask Mme Chalbert before she has a chance to start the ritual which will summon the Beast Outside Time. However, Mme Chalbert is both clever and powerful and there will be no way of convincing the French authorities that she is about to bring doom upon the world, or indeed that she is likely to be guilty of anything serious. She is respected by both the police and the clergy, and known and liked by local people, although there are one or two fishermen in the port of St Brieuc who have seen strange things on the island at night, and there have been occasional disappearances which they like to attribute to her - but most folk treat this as malicious gossip.

If the modern characters do not wish to broadcast their presence in the area, they may wish to stay on the Channel islands, which are only about 10 miles from the isle of Casson (see map). In St Brieuc they would be remarked upon immediately as it is not a holiday town at all, and nosey characters will probably be reported to Mme Chalbert very quickly. It is easy to hire a boat in the Channel Islands, less so (especially for foreigners) in St Brieuc.

Mme Chalbert is undertaking the ritual in the belief that it will summon to her an object of the utmost black power with which she will be able to dominate whole countries and preserve her immortality, and has already arranged a suitable date for the ritual to start. Her coven assembles over the two days previous to the evening she has appointed (see the **Characters** section - next issue). Mme Chalbert spends this time preparing for the ritual in a secret part of the house to which only she knows the entrance. Due to the very odd nature of the Chateau's architecture, the presence of the secret chambers is very hard to divine. However, she has taken precautions to safeguard her position both before and during the ritual.

The first precaution was the hiring of 4 guards to patrol the tiny island and make sure no-one lands without her knowledge:

4 Guards - Human

STR 15	CON 15	SIZ 14	INT 12	POW 7
DEX 14	APP 10	EDU 9	SAN 30	Hit Pts 15

Skills: +1d4 damage bonus; Climb 50%, Jump 50%, Speak French 60%, Speak English 10%, Hand-to-Hand Attack - Fist 75%, Kick 40%, Handgun Attack 65%, Shotgun Attack 50%.

Two of these men, recruited from the demobbed French army of the Great War, are on patrol at all times. They have a small guardhouse by the jetty which is the only place on the isle a boat could readily land, although it is possible for characters in a boat to jump to the rocky shore as long as there is someone competent at the tiller to keep the boat steady, the weather isn't too bad and they make their Jump roll! The other guards are in the servants' quarters of the Chateau, resting. It will take some time for them to come to any alarm as they will probably have to dress and collect their weapons. Each guard has a .45 revolver in a hip holster and a 20-gauge shotgun in the guardhouse. The shotgun may (40% chance) be carried when they are patrolling the island, which they do once every hour. At other times they may just sit in their guardhouse and play cards. They also have flashlights, rope and assorted tools in the guardhouse. Both the guardhouse and the boathouse are built of clinkerboard and corrugated iron roofing, with concrete foundations.

In the boathouse, which has a slipway down behind the jetty, is a modern motorboat along with maintenance equipment and tools.

Madame Chalbert also has other guards within the house; the Book of Doom that she has inherited from Gorgos has taught her several spells including *Summon Nightgaunt, Bind Nightgaunt* and *Create Ghoul*. The latter is a special spell which you may wish to create details for and use in your campaign. Mme Chalbert had two local men captured and has turned them into ghouls through the use of this spell. The process takes 3 to 6 months during which the subject is put through continuous hideous torture. The ghouls now guard the entrance room.to the suite of hidden chambers in the Chateau:

2 Ghouls (CoC p46) -

STR 20	CON 15	SIZ 15	INT 11	POW14
DEX 14	Hit Pts 15	Move 9	SAN Loss 1D6/nil	

Attacks: Claws 30% 1D6+1D4; Bite 1D6+1D4+worry
Armour: 0; guns do ½ damage

The ghouls have instructions to attack anyone entering the room not accompanied by their creator. They hide (*Hide* skill 60%) in alcoves on each side of the door from the main part of the Chateau, but their stench pervades the room.

The other supernatural guard Mme Chalbert has is a summoned Nightgaunt which resides in the upper floor of the tower. It is charged with carrying off any intruder on the island. It will not mistake the guards for intruders as Mme Chalbert has placed certain charms on their belts (Spot Hidden to notice this when guards are encountered, and successful Cthulhu Mythos roll will elicit nature of the charm). Anyone with the guards is also safe. Nightgaunts have accounted for two other disappearances of inquisitive locals. If a party member is carried off by the Nightgaunt, they will either be killed, or deposited on a hillside in the Böhmer Wald near Plzen in Czechoslovakia.

Nightgaunt (CoC p52) -

STR 15	CON 12	SIZ 16	INT 4	POW 16
DEX 15	Hit Pts 14	Mv 6/12	SAN Loss 1d6/nil	

Attacks: Grapple 30% then Tickle 30%
Armour: 2pt skin
Skills: Sneak 90%, Hide 90%

When the characters arrive, it is the day of the ritual *unless* the characters have discovered the day of the ritual and managed to get there earlier.

***Note** - if the characters arrive too late, or fail to stop the ritual once started, there is a 75% chance Gorgos will successfully arrive in the 20th century and a 25% chance of the end of the entire space-time continuum. If Gorgos gets there he will immediately start summoning all sorts of supernatural aid before bringing down the rest of the thromb race and conquering the whole world. This is **not** a successful conclusion to the scenario.*

If the characters arrive on the island during the day, there is a greater chance that they will be spotted by someone in the house or by one of the guards. If they arrive at night, they are almost certain to attract the attention of the Nightgaunt, whose main purpose is to distract intruders.

Layout of the Chateau

No plans are provided for the Chateau, since most of the action will take place at night when the characters 'assault' the house to disturb the ritual. The layout is confusing inside; deliberately so. The GM should describe the chateau in terms of typical rooms: "The butler leads you to the library" or "There are stairs leading down towards the cellar". The players should not be allowed to think their characters have a clear picture of the chateau at any time before the events in the secret chambers.

Inside, the Chateau is appointed in typical French modernist style of the '20s. the rooms are generally spacious and lofty, and all have vast expanses of glass. There are just two floors, but both are split level with different rooms staggered in height and connected by seemingly random stairways, spiral ramps and passages. Some windows are of stained glass, such as a 13'x8' window in the dining room depicting an abstract seascape in blue and green. The doors into the lounge have glass representations of Muchas' *Four Seasons*. Electric lighting has been installed, run from a generator in the basement.

The lower floor contains a servants' area with kitchen, cold store, pantry, servants' living room etc; at the other end of the Chateau is the main entrance opening into the hallway and main staircase. Off the hallway are a games room, morning room and lounge. From the lounge one can go to the games room, dining room or study. Further on from the study are Sir Geoffry's old collection rooms - there are three of these, stuffed with display cabinets from digs all over the world, untouched (nor even seen much) since Sir Geoffry suddenly retired from archaeology. The morning room and games room both have french windows opening onto the magnificent balcony which extends as a patio and paved way all around the house. There is a servants' corridor from the pantry, between the dining room and the morning room, continuing past the lounge and through a disguised entrance into the hallway. Serving doors open into all those rooms mentioned; these are concealed as panels in the wall.

The upper floor contains the servants' rooms at one end. There are normally three maids, a housekeeper, a butler and a valet/handyman. However, while she prepares the Ritual, Mme Chalbert has given *all* her servants leave and they are absent on the mainland. All have accomodation, and there is also space for a number of visitors' servants above the servants' area downstairs. At the eastern end of the Chateau are the guest apartments and, beneath the tower, Mme Chalbert's suite. The latter is the height of luxury. The tower can be reached by a stair ascending from an outside door, or from Mme Chalbert's solar on the first floor. Both entrances are kept locked, and that within the solar is cunningly concealed amidst a plaster wall fresco.

The secret chambers are located amongst and below the collection rooms. They are accessed only from the study, the sole entrance being above the fireplace. The chimney is displaced behind and around a set of steps which fold down from the mantel. Down a narrow passage is the first chamber, painted with gold and vermillion designs from floor to ceiling with a great rune inscribed in black marble on the ceiling. There are two alcoves, dark recesses where the ghouls wait, one to each side of the corridor. They are fed with live animals and blood stains may be seen on the grey stone floor. Their stench fills the air with nauseous odour. The ghouls (see above) will try and use their Sneak skill to attack with surprise.

There are two exits from the first chamber: to a preparation room and to a spiral stair leading down. The preparation room is tiny, crammed with a rack of robes, a cupboard of magical equipment (herbs, candles, parchment, feathers, braziers, chalk and paint, vials of liquid, mortars, pestles and so on), a small wardrobe for clothes discarded when changing, a small locked casket containing an assortment of books and magical items (GM's choice) and a couple of battered chairs.

The spiral stair leads down to three chambers beneath the house. All have solid walls carved from the bedrock and faced with polished stone, much of it carved with arcane designs and pictoglyphs by Mme Chalbert. The first chamber is nothing more than a waiting room, where the acolytes gather and wait for their leader. It is about 15' across and leads through a carved archway to the second chamber. This is smaller, just 10' across, but the carvings are diabolical and frighteningly realistic. Characters entering here must make a SAN roll, *adding* half their Cthulhu Mythos bonus, or lose 1D4 SAN. The chamber is a treasure crypt, for concealed beneath the flagstones in the floor are the instruments of Mme Chalbert's black magic: a set of golden manacles and a gold sacrificial knife; a gold thurible and block of potent incense; a magical Arab stone tablet that aids in the binding of summoned creatures by adding 4 to the spellcaster's Magic Points when compared to those of the creature; and finally the *Book of Doom* prepared by Gorgos and described elsewhere. These treasures are arranged in concealed holes symmetrically placed in a complex pentagonal design on the mosaic floor of the chamber. Indescribable and insane carvings of eldritch horrors surround the archway through to the final chamber.

The chamber of summoning is a powerfully oppressive and evil place. Even unoccupied its aura is such that anyone failing a SAN roll will be too afraid to cross its unwholesome threshhold. The room itself is vaulted and rises to 16' at the centre from 10' high at the walls. The floor and walls are of polished black marble veined with yellow; the veins in the walls have been carefully carved in an imitation of crawling tentacles and almost seem to glisten. The room is lit by candlelight during the ritual, and on the floor a circle and pentagram have been inscribed with charcoal and chalk.

If the ritual is interrupted, the characters entering the room will see Mme Chalbert partially disrobed, wildly incanting from the Book of Doom. Her arms and breasts are scored and bloody from the gold knife she wields and light smoke from the thurible waft around. Following her chanting are the twelve other members of the coven, clad in yellow robes like those of the priests in Gorgos's Temple of

Theldred Gusteau's Introduction

"I only know that in 19--, while observing at close range the fantastic eruptions of _____ as that island rose up out of the sea, I fished aboard my boat a massive piece of volcanic flotsam whose fortunate recovery seemed destined to reshape the thinking of the entire anthropological world!

"The thing was both astonishing and awesome. Astonishing in that, embedded in the mass of greyish-white, foamlike rock, a ball of blue glass like a an eye clearly showed through the wash of waves. Awesome in that this mass - whose glassy passenger was, even at first glance, quite obviously an artefact of some sort - had recently been ejected from the heart of the newborn volcano.

"Once they had the thing on board, my men were quick to break away the still warm lava about its large glass core, then to carefully carry that nucleus to my cabin. Grey droplets of seawater still clung to its surface, and the soapy scum of lava and volcanic dust obscured its true colour and .... contents. But when I had cleaned it with a towel, then those of my crew with me gasped, and for a moment the magic of the volcano's birth was almost entirely forgotten.

"For here was something that surely could not be! Locked in the bluish glass was a box of dull yellow metal in the shape of a seven inch cube. It had hasps and hinges and was covered with mystic symbols and the grimacing faces of krakens and dragons, hybrid dwarves and giants, serpents and demons and other night-things from all the corners of myth and legend.

"We put into port and I took the glass ball with me to an hotel. It was solid, this sphere, and yet curiously light, made of glass unknown to modern science. After I had taken many photographs and shown the thing to a number of friends and colleagues, I sat down to determine a way to get at the golden box within.

"Had the sphere been hollow, then a simple shattering of the glass might suffice, but it was not, and I had no wish to damage the box. In the end, nine frustrated days later in London, I procured a jeweller's diamond-tipped drill and commenced what I thought must prove an almost intolerably long process of drilling. In this I was mistaken.

"I had drilled no more than two holes into the sphere, each to within an inch or so of its nucleus, when there began to flow from the second hole an oily blue substance that smoked on contact with the air. Patently, in drilling the second hole fractionally deeper than the first, I had broken through to this previously invisible agent which surrounded the golden box. It bubbled up out of the drill hole and bled thinly down the side of the sphere - and wherever it flowed the glass melted away like butter.

"So acrid were the fumes, I was soon driven to desert the house and had to abide in ignorance the passing of whatever catalytic reaction was taking place within. When the smoke cleared some minutes later I rushed back to my work table and there saw the golden box lying in a few slivers of evaporating glass. Even these rounded chips I tried to save, washing them under the cold water; but to no avail, the catalyst had an unbreakable hold on them.

"How my fingers trembled when, having wiped down the workbench top and removed the box to my study proper, I eased back the hasps and lifted the lid on hinges which were as well oiled as if attended to only yesterday! For a long moment I could only stand and stare, all a-tremble and breaking out in a sweat of fevered anticipation, but then I forced myself to a semblance of calmness and set about to take more photographs as I lifted each item from the box to spread across the table.

"There was a tiny silver whistle whose mouth was sealed with hardened wax; several small dark bottles of sealed liquid, each marked in redly-glowing hieroglyphs on a sort of leathery label; a magnifying glass in a square golden frame delicately filigreed with intriguing arabesques and inlaid at the corners with irridescent mother-of-pearl; a tiny skull, as of a monkey, but with only one eyesocket central in the forehead, all covered in gold leaf except for the eye, which was a ruby big as my small fingernail; a folded map of sorts on a type of parchment which began to disintegrate as soon as I spread it; a set of silver dividers in perfect working condition; a beautiful bamboo flute of exquisite workmanship; a lead pendant in the shape of a lizard devouring its own tail; the great, needle-sharp, curved ivory tooth of some beast of prey, with a hardwood handle set into its root and making of it a deadly dagger; and finally, beneath all of these lesser treasures, runebooks and scrolls and documents, all of fine skins no thicker than paper but lubricated in a way which left them supple after God-only-knows how vast a stretch of time.

"Several loose leaves there were too, finely hieroglyphed in figures completely new to me and almost certainly beyond the talents of any of today's cryptographers or runic interpreters; and as I laid these carefully on my table a draught disturbed them, threatening to blow them onto the floor. I used the first thing to hand - the ancient glass square frame - to pin them down, and so accidentally stumbled across a most fantastic revelation.

"Whoever had stocked this golden box and sealed it had not only wisely and deliberately protected it against its journey into future aeons but had also foreseen certain of the difficulties its discoverer must eventually face. Beyond doubt he had been a scientist of sorts, this man, but this was surely much more than science!

"My head swam di£ily and I clutched at the table's edge. I blinked my eyes and looked again... Then stared... And finally, rubbing furiously at my eyes, I shakily pulled up a chair and sat down to peer yet again, unbelievingly, at the hieroglyphs that now swam up large through the blue-tinted glass of the magnifier.

"They were hieroglyphs no longer!

"Now I could read those immemorial miniscules as easily as if I had written them myself, for now - or so it appeared through the impossible lens of the magnifier - they were in German, the language of my youth! Eagerly I read a page, two, three, copying down the words in scratchy English as I scanned through that incredible glass, watching the blurred, alien and unknown characters and symbols writhing into clearly discernable words, phrases, sentences and paragraphs as I slowly slid the magnifier over them where they lay.

"Then a tragedy. My hand was so ashake, my eyes watering with the strain of staring at this continual, mesmerising metamorphosis, that I dropped the glass and gasped horrifed as it cracked sharply against a corner of the golden box. Instantly a thin trickle of oily blue liquid seeped out from the interior of the lens. Less than twenty seconds later no trace remained of the miraculous lens, only its square frame and a rapidly dispersing mist of acrid smoke.

"For a moment I despaired, cursing myself for a clumsy fool and almost crying out loud in frustration; but then I snatched up my three pages of scribbled notes and realised that all was not lost! In those few scraps of paper I had a key, one which would unlock the secrets of the manuscripts just as surely as any magical magnifier - but much more slowly.

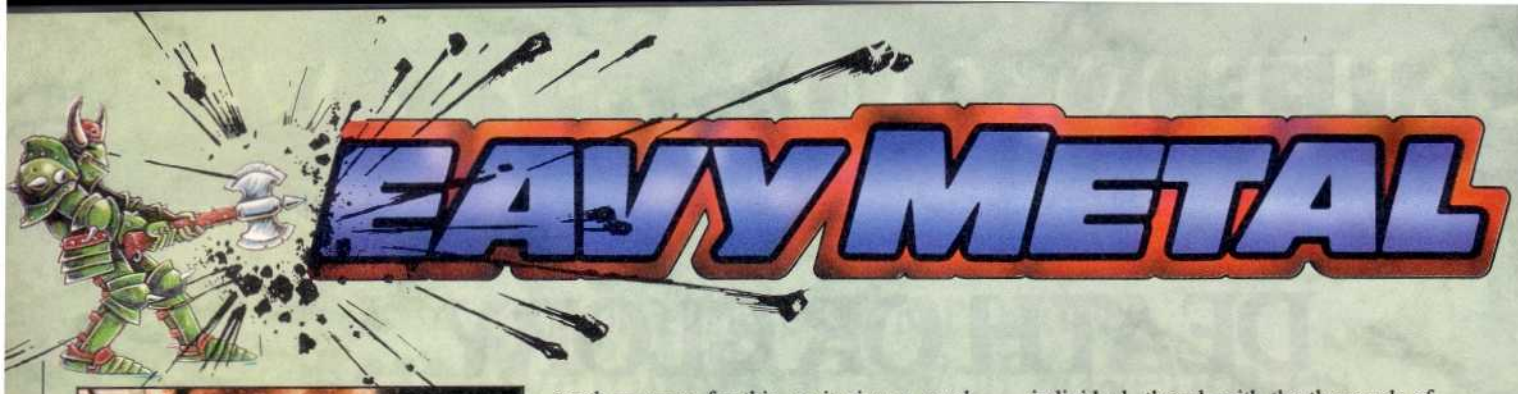
"For nine long years I laboured - not only over my translations but also to gain recognition of an Age of Man predating prehistory! - but while I have successfully translated a good third of Teh Atht's runebooks and manuscripts, I have failed dismally to impress any real authority with the enormity of the treasure I found in a lava bomb hurled from the throat of a volcano.

"Perhaps if my find had been less spectacular.... if I had told no-one of the disappearing sphere and lens of glass.... and certainly had I made no mention of the magnifier's wondrous powers of translation, things might have been different. As it is: still I am irked considerably to be looked upon as 'somewhat peculiar' or as 'quaintly eccentric', and this despite my previous reputation and the fact that I have photographic evidence and friends who will vouchsafe the truth of what I say."

the Secret Gods in Klühn. Inside the circle is a flickering, shadowy, supernatural terror; a projection of the Beast Outside Time. Seeing this also requires a SAN roll - those failing lose 2D10 SAN pts, those succeeding still losing 1D3. I will not attempt to describe the Beast (such things are not for printing or speaking of, even if the English language with its million words had sufficient vocabulary) but as GM you must manfully attempt to convey some of the enormity of horror that It carries with it.

Mme Chalbert's ritual will be interrupted if she is attacked or if more than two of her coven are stopped from chanting. When the break in the enchantment comes, she will utter an unearthly scream and all the coven members will cease chanting, frozen into immobility by the transformation of the Beast Outside Time. The Beast will suddenly expand to fill the whole circle, straining at the magic bonds. If anyone has crossed or broken the magic circle at any time, It will increase to fill the room. Then all the modern characters will feel an immense force tugging at their chests, as if their bodies were attached by an unbreakable cord, as the Beast Outside Time withdraws from both eras it had penetrated simultaneously. There is a fleeting sensation of being hurled through some cosmic distance, then ... nothing. Blissful unconsciousness sweeps over them all and they arrive in Teh Atht's Tower in Theem'hdra completely unaware and uncaring of their fate.

Next Issue: *The characters cross in time - and must fight for their lives against Gorgos!*



This Month:
Aly Morrison

Over the past few months there have been quite a few painting articles in various magazines on the theme of 'I did it my way'. Well, folks - here's another one!

My personal painting style has evolved over twenty years of painting various figures, everything from collectors' to fantasy figures. When it comes to specific techniques, my rule is - there are no rules. I will quite happily paint oils on top of acrylics and then wash inks on top of that. If I can get it onto the brush, it'll go onto the figure. Have you seen the latest range of nail varnish down at Boots?

By now, you must have a pretty good idea of the different types of paint available. As nearly everybody makes acrylics nowadays, I tend to use these most often. There's a huge army of colours to choose from, but if there's a colour I can't get with acrylics, I'm not afraid to change to a different medium in the middle of a figure. If you keep trying out different paints, you'll soon find the ones you prefer to work with. Now I'll explain how I go about getting the effects I want in my painting.

The first steps

First, take you shiny, beautifully handcrafted masterpiece and use a scapel or craft knife to trim off all the beautifully handcrafted flash and mould lines. This is where I remind you to be careful; blood is very difficult to get out of the carpet. If you're going to paint the figure as it is sold - without changing it in any way - it now needs fixing to the base and priming. I usually use a car touch-up spray for this, as it gives a good, even coverage and comes in a variety of colours. Yes, undercoats don't have to be white! Black, for example, is a good colour for metallic figures such as armoured chaos warriors. If you're going to use gold or bronze metallic paint, try a red or yellow undercoat. Grey or brown will make the colours on top look more muted - this is good if you want the figures to look scruffy or tatty. Once you've undercoated, let your figures dry overnight.

While the undercoat's drying, let me tell you something about my method of converting figures. I very rarely do any! The most I will do is to change a weapon or head. Having spent the whole day making figures for Citadel the last thing I want is to play with more putty when I get home. This is purely personal; many people enjoy converting figures to make them more unusual or individual, though with the thousands of figures available these days, there should be something available to suit everyone. I think that a good paint job can achieve just as much originality.

OK, the undercoat should be dry by now.

The general feel I like to get on a figure is that of porcelain or ceramics. I don't particularly like the finish to be too 'authentic'. These are fantasy figures, and that's how I like them to look.

We'll start with flesh and faces, but - depending on the figure you're painting - you don't necessarily have to do things in this order. First paint on your chosen skin colour. Once this is dry I colour wash over it with ink or dilute paint as a suitable shading

Fig 1

Fig 2

Fig 3

Fig 4

Fig 5

Fig 6

Fig 7

Fig 8

Fig 9

Fig 10

colour. For European humanoid flesh I use a brown or red/brown wash, for negroid a dark brown or blue/black. A blue/grey or green wash can make a figure look most unwell, and its good for chaos types. I keep my colour washes fairly light, prefering to do two or three on top of each other than just one dark wash.

I have recently started using Rowney Cryla gloss medium to dilute down inks. This gives a slightly viscous consistency to the wash and it flows on better - an effect I find preferable to using water. Once the colour wash is dry, I highlight back up using the original flesh tone, carefully blending in the edges to give a smooth finish. When dry, I highlight further using white mixed in with the flesh colour and blended in. This can be repeated until you're eventually highlighting with pure white. At this point, dark shading is put in down the side of the nose, in the eye sockets, along the mouth and hairline and under the chin, using a very fine brush and a slightly darker colour than the original wash. If I wish to make the shading even darker, I'll use extra washes, or a rapidograph pen which creates a more cartoon-like effect. After all your highlighting is finished, put a very thin wash of your original shading colour over the whole skin area, as this pulls the whole thing together and gives added depth. If you feel the colour is too pale, repeat the wash until it looks right.

When painting eyes, put a very dark wash around the eye sockets. It doesn't have to be brown - blue or purple will make characters look very evil. Be careful not to overdo this or your character will look like he's been punched in the eye! Remember, in an eye there is never too much white showing - don't make yours look like a fried egg. The pupils are added using a fine brush or a Rapidograph pen (size 0.13).

At this point a wash of brick red ink can be out over the lips and a wash of dilute blue or Payne's grey ink over the chin to look like designer stubble. Alternatively, dot stubble in with a pen. Any hair is painted in using the same procedure, as is any other skin area. Once the flesh colours are dry, you can add interesting tones around straps etc, by using small quantities of very dilute ink in purple, blue or green, and veins can be suggested with lines of dilute wash at places where they would be near the surface of the skin. I'd now consider the flesh finished. Scars, tatoos and warpaint I'll deal with later.

Fig 1&5: Skragg the Slaughterer C23 Ogre
Fig 2,3,4: Samples of Aly's patterns & textures
Fig 6: Skaven the Chaos Ratmen (C47)
Fig 7: C20 Troll
Fig 8&9: Detailed Back & Front View of Ulrik Skarsol(BC5)
Fig 10: Orc Champion (BC2) & Hobgoblin Champion (RR15)
Fig 11: Ornate C36 Hobgoblin
Fig 12: A conversion morrison style of an old C35 Chaos Warrior
Fig 13: ADD6 Paladin and the Black Dwarf from Asgard
Fig 14: Dark Warriors of Chaos
Fig 15: C27 Goblin Mutant & C36 Hobgoblin
Fig 16: C15 Orc Standard Bearer, another Morrison conversion
Fig 17: Arcane Asgard creature of Chaos
Fig 18: C35 Chaos Warrior
Fig 19: C28 Giant

Fig 11

Fig 12

Fig 13

Fig 14

Fig 15

Fig 16

Fig 18

Fig 17

Fig 19

Cloth

Generally, I use the same procedure for cloth as I do for skin. If I want scruffier cloth, I will dry brush the highlights instead of blending them. Each colour nowadays is sold in so many different shades that you ought to be able to highlight without using added white. Whenever possible I try to keep to this technique as it keeps the colour vivid while lightening it, whereas added white would make the colour paler.

Once the basic cloth colour is finished, the fun really begins! You don't have to stick to just one colour for clothes; there are lots of different types of decoration. Look at a book on costume and you will see endless paterns and colour combinations - hoops of different colours, stripes, zigzags, diamonds, dots and jester patterns. Edges of cloth are often decorated with bands of contrasting colours or patterns. Entire costumes can be covered with a repeat design - chequers or diamonds or flowers - and wizards look good covered in runes and magical symbols.

All these effects add individuality and brightness to a figure, but be selective. Too many different patterns on the one figure can look cluttered and messy. When you have decided on the design you want to use, draw it onto the figure first with a sharp HB pencil, then paint the details in as finely as possible. A point to note is that some inks when used for colour washing can bleed through onto the lighter water-soluble paints you use for patterns. This problem is easily solved by using oil-based paints such as enamels for the decoration. If you use a large block of colour as part of the design, such as different coloured sleeves, don't forget to shade them too. Generally, with flowers or repeat patterns I'll leave them the colour I first painted them, but if you find this looks too false and bright, a very dilute wash of sepia or nut brown will tone them in. Don't make the wash too dark though, or the effect will look too grubby. Belts and straps need only the basic colour and a simple highlight, and black belts need no highlight at all.

When painting metal studs, buckles and brooches, paint the item black first. For silver I use any acrylic paint, and for gold I use Rose gold powder mixed with Rowney cryla gloss medium. For bronze, brass, etc, use whatever appropriate colour you can find with a light wash of brown ink, highlighted with gold. I always use water-based metallic paints, as I find that some enamels run when they're varnished. It's no fun finding that your beautifully painted check-patterned cloak gets covered with a gold sheen. Try out metallic colours before you use them on a figure. If they do react to varnish, coat them with the indispensible Rowney cryla gloss beforehand, and that should stop the paint running.

To paint smooth fur, use the same techniques as for cloth; for speed of for a hairier effect you can dry-brush the highlights on. Try painting different animal skins like leopard, tiger, zebra etc, or make up your own - they look particularly good on cloaks.

Armour

Decide which colour armour you're going to paint. For iron and steel I use a mixture of Citadel mithril silver and blue or brown paint. For bronze or yellow metal, any copper, brass or bronze paint will do. When the initial colour is dry, colour wash with peat brown or sepia ink for iron or steel, for yellow metal wash with a rich brown ink such as Rotring brown drawing ink. When dry highlighting back up with the original colour and pick out details with silver for iron and gold for yellow metals. If you want the armour to be a 'Paladin' steel, give it a wash of blue ink.

Now the aging process - all those sticky, horrible biological stains normal washing powder can't remove! First rust - use red/brown ink around rivets, joints and under armpits. Touches of green or blue make good stains, and on yellow metal it's very effective to use green from the start instead of the red/brown. After this is dry, look through your inks and add touches of various colours here and there to make interesting marks and stains. This is especially good for chaos, ogre or orcish figures. Scratches can then be added with thin lines of sepia or brown ink. The secret is not to cover the whole armour with rust and stains, but to leave most of the original colour visible with just the necessary aging to get what you want.

Armour doesn't have to be a standard metal colour - chaos armour could be black or red. Historical armour was often lacquered or painted in many different colours, and sometimes patterns were painted on it. There are even records of 16th century helmets being covered in red velvet. You can see there are no set rules. Experiment with different colour washes to see what effects they have. An interesting variation on black armour is to paint it blue first, and then build up the black colour with alternate dilute washes of black, blue or green. Swords and other weapons can be treated in the same ways.

Tatoos, warpaint, scars, wounds and zits

I like painting tatoos on my figures. They add an extra dimension and individuality to each figure. Use a fine brush or a radiograph pen with blue or green ink to paint on the tatoo. There are infinite sources to get your ideas from. Just a few I have used are runes, celtic patterns, oaths and symbols, but try not to get carried away and use too many mixed symbols on one figure. An ogre covered in celtic spirals will look great, but if you then write the history of the Roman Empire down his arm as well it'll looking like blue porridge!

Tatoos and warpaint on the face can give a superb look to quite plain figures. Bandit mask stripes over the eyes will make them stand out more and the character will look pretty mean. Red Indian style face paint looks good too. Whole areas of the face can be painted different colours. Take a look at books on tribal peoples or theatrical makeup for inspiration.

There are two kinds of scars that I use. One is the lurid scar of pulp fame, which is very easy to do. Paint a brick red line where the scar will be and once it is dry use a pale flesh colour to paint finely down the middle. For reasonably fresh scars such as flogging marks I use crimson poster paint instead of pale flesh for this. Because poster paint is quite thick, you can raise the surface of the scar above the skin - very effective! To paint juicy wounds, cut into the metal of the figure and paint as you would for a scar, with perhaps a little bright crimson in the wound or yellow dots if the flesh is starting to putrefy. It just depends on how tastless you want to be!

Quickies

If you want to paint a large number of figures quickly, for a goblin army or lizard tribe, there are a couple of things you can do to speed the process up. One is to use oil paints with a 'wipe off' technique. Undercoat your figure in white, and paint the appropriate green colour on in oils. Then, using a fine sponge (the ones from the Citadel blister packs are ideal) lightly wipe off the oil paint from the raised surface of the figure. This leaves the colour in the shadows. Then, using a fresh sponge, dab lightly over the whole figure, which will blend the colour into a good skin effect. Remember that oils take a while to dry, but you can easily paint the flesh of large numbers of figures at a time. After drying for a couple of days they'll be ready for you to paint in the costumes and other details. Another tip is to use a lighter colour for the flesh than you want the finished figure to have, and then apply several light coats of colour wash. This gives effective, quick shading.

Varnishing

I always give my figures a gloss varnish, even if they're going to be matt finished later on. Gloss gives good, tough protection for your figures and brings out the depth and brightness of the colours you have used. If you want your figures to be matt, let the gloss dry thoroughly and then spray with a couple of coats of Letraset matt varnish or paint carefully with one of the bottled matt varnishes available.

Bases

I try to keep bases as simple as possible. First I build up around the feet with Tetrion or Polyfilla, then glue on sand and paint it green. This is best if you are using figures as playing pieces, as I do; any decoration on the bases is bound to get broken. If your figure isn't going to be used, then the addition of mushrooms, stones or foliage looks good. Model them in Miliput and paint as desired.

As a final note, the one thing to be remembered is that you should never be afraid of trying anything once. You may make a mess - I still do - but you may just discover that perfect look.

BACK TO THE READERS POLL

Once again, it's your chance to beat the editors of *White Dwarf* into submission, by telling us just what you think of games and gaming. After all, it's only the best part of two years since the last one, and things have changed somewhat since then... And just as an added inducement, all the completed questionnaires will be entered into a prize draw, and the two lucky winners will win **£150 worth of Citadel or Games Workshop products**. Just complete your entry and use the pre-paid 'envelope' overleaf to send it to *White Dwarf, Games Workshop Design Studio, Enfield Chambers, 16-18 Low Pavement, Nottingham NG1 7DL*. Or, take your completed form to any Games Workshop Shop, and we'll give you a free figure - worth 60p. Have it here by September 1st, and your name can go in the draw. The results of the Poll will appear in the October or November issue.

1. ***What do you think of the following departments?***
   Answer: A Amazin'; B Brill; C Average; D Duff; E Errrggggh!!
   (a) Open Box..... (b) Critical Mass.....
   (c) Fracas..... (d) 2020 Vision.....
   (e) Small Ads..... (f) Letters.....
   (g) 'Eavy Metal..... (h) Gobbledigook.....
   (i) Thrudd.....
2. ***Which has been the best issue to date?*** .....
3. ***Which issue had the best cover?*** .....
4. ***Which is the earliest issue you have purchased?*** .....
5. ***Which has been the best issue in the last 12 months (WDs 67-80)?***.....
6. ***Which has been the best scenario to date?*** .....
7. ***Which has been the best feature to date?*** .....
8. ***Would you prefer more features, more scenarios, or is the balance about right?***
   Answer: F more features; S more scenarios; R about right.....
9. ***In the last year, WD has gradually phased out the regular gaming departments; is this something of which you approve or disapprove?***
   Answer: A Approve; B Disapprove; C No opinion; D Why did you get rid of my favourite department (sniff!)? .....
10. ***If the answer to question (9) was D, which departments would you have kept?***
    Answer: Tick the following if they are departments you would have kept
    (a) Starbase..... (b) Treasure Chest.....
    (c) Crawling Chaos..... (d) Fiend Factory.....
    (e) Rune Rites..... (f) Heroes & Villains.....
11. ***Do you prefer scenarios in WD to be written for a specific system, written for multi-systems, or written without game statistics at all?***
    Answer: A 1 system; B multi-system; C no system .....
12. ***How many people (beside yourself) read your copy of WD?***
    .....
13. ***Do you ever look at or buy other magazines?***
    Answer: Use as many of the following codes for each magazine that you have read at least once in the last 6 months.
    A Buy every issue; B Buy some issues; C Read friend(s)' copies; D Prefer to WD; E Find less interesting than WD
    (a) Dragon..... (b) Tortured Souls.....
    (c) Different Worlds..... (d) Heroes.....
    (e) Challenge..... (f) Warlock.....
    (g) GameMaster Publ..... (h) Adventurer.....
14. ***Do you read any fanzines?*** Yes/No
15. ***If the answer to 14 is Yes; which is your favourite?*** .....
16. ***Do you own a home computer which you use for games playing?*** Yes/No
17. ***If the answer to (16) was Yes; which computer do you own?***
    .....
18. ***Do you usually use miniatures when playing rpgs?*** Yes/No
19. ***Do you find the advertisements in WD useful?*** Yes/No
20. ***Have you ever purchased a game product because of an advertisement in WD?*** Yes/No
21. ***Do you play any games postally?*** Yes/No
22. ***Have you ever taken part in live-action roleplaying?*** Yes/No
23. ***Do you ever read solo gamebooks?*** Yes/No
24. ***What is the most enjoyable idea/aspect/topic in WD?***
    .....
25. ***What is the worst idea/aspect/topic in WD?***
    .....
26. ***Which are the four roleplaying games you have played most in the last year?***
    Answer: Put a number beside the four games you have played most often in the last year; 1 = the game you have played most often, 4 = the game you have played 4th most often. Do not rate more than four games. If you have played less than four, only rate those you have played.
    (a) AD&D..... (b) D&D.....
    (c) Runequest..... (d) Traveller.....
    (e) T&T..... (f) Bushido.....
    (g) Star Trek..... (h) Call of Cthulhu.....
    (i) Stormbringer..... (j) MERP.....
    (k) Paranoia..... (l) Judge Dredd.....
    (m) Golden Heroes..... (n) Warhammer.....
    (o) Indiana Jones..... (p) Marvel SH.....
    (q) Toon..... (r) Dr Who.....
    (s) Twilight 2000..... (t) Pendragon.....
    (u) DC Heroes..... (v) Star Frontiers.....
    (w) Battletech..... (x) Ringworld.....
    (y) Ghostbusters..... (z) other (specify).....
27. ***Which games would you like to see more/less of in WD?***
    Answer: Place an M against games you wish to see more of, and an L against the games you wish to see less of. **Make sure the number of Ms equals the number of Ls.**
    (a) AD&D..... (b) D&D.....
    (c) Runequest..... (d) Traveller.....
    (e) T&T..... (f) Bushido.....
    (g) Star Trek..... (h) Call of Cthulhu.....
    (i) Stormbringer..... (j) MERP.....
    (k) Paranoia..... (l) Judge Dredd.....
    (m) Golden Heroes..... (n) Warhammer.....
    (o) Indiana Jones..... (p) Marvel SH.....
    (q) Toon..... (r) Dr Who.....
    (s) Twilight 2000..... (t) Pendragon.....
    (u) DC Heroes..... (v) Star Frontiers.....
    (w) Battletech..... (x) Ringworld.....
    (y) Ghostbusters..... (z) other (specify).....
28. ***Has WD got better or worse since the last Readers' Poll (WD57)?***
    Answer: Y Yes; N No; S about the same. Do not answer if you did not read WD57 .....
29. ***How long have you been playing roleplaying games?*** .....
    Years
30. ***How many people normally play rpgs together in your group?*** ..
31. ***How old are you?*** ..... Years
32. ***Are you male or female?*** M/F
33. ***Where do you normally buy your WD?*** *Answer: A Newsagents; B Games Shop; C Subscription/Mail Order*
    .....
34. ***If you wish to be entered in the Prize Draw, please enter your name and address below:***
    Name: .....
    Address: .....
    ..... Post Code.....

WHITE DWARF READERS POLL
WHITE DWARF READERS POLL
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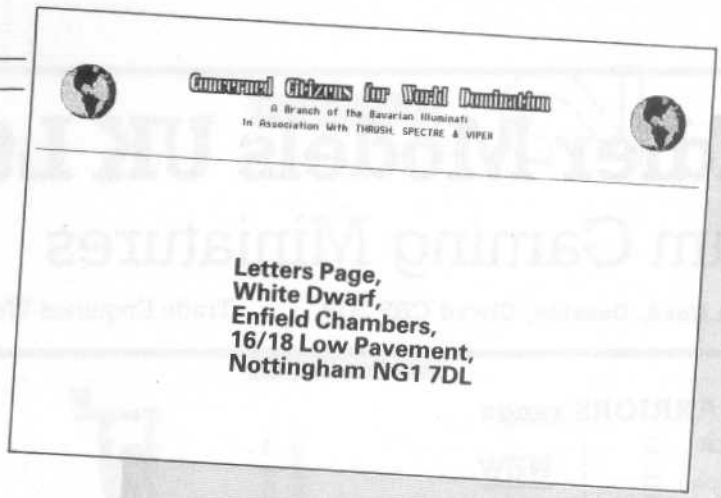


Aha! Success! Not only have we managed to get away from letters about sexism and ageism, but we've actually got some letters about ***games****! Amazin'. Just to celebrate, we'll get right on with them, and see how little room it leaves for the sexist, racist, young demons in D&D debate.*

Edward Tart, Middleton, G Manchester: This letter is directed at Matthew Salter (*Letters WD78*). Thank you for your theories on elves, dwarves, hobbits, etc. I'm not sure anyone else will want them, though.

J R R Tolkien created hobbits himself. They filled a gap in Middle Earth and enabled him to link up some important factors in his tales. His sources for the other denizens are the mythologies of different cultures, mainly the Celtic and Norse, and, in particular, the legends of Beowulf.

Tony Fortune, Carlow, Ireland: Matthew Salters's letter. Before Tolkien came on the scene elves were more like Noddy, hobbits were unheard of and *Time Bandits* wasn't even made! Orc is a word Tolkien invented *(no he didn't - Ed.)*..

Enough about that. Attitudes like Laurielle Miller's (Letters, WD78) are what the hobby needs!

M R Chiddicks, Norwich, Norfolk: Gary Lea in WD78 was dead right in his complaints about AD&D initiative, but the Action Roll system suggested in the answer is still not good enough - and for that matter is probably the way most GMs run initiative anyway.

As an alternative, I'd like to suggest the following system which I use very successfully in my game.

First, the official timescale of 1 minute per round is silly and unworkable - instead, if the segment is defined as 1 or 2 seconds and the rounds as 10-20 seconds then combat becomes much more realistic.

The basic initiative roll is on d10, the result being the segment on which the blow falls, this being adjusted for weapon speed and dexterity. Add the reverse of the react/attack adjustment to the roll (ie, Dex 18 gives -3 on the roll). If the attack is psionic, a prepared missile or a spell, subtract 3. For weapons, if the speed factor is 1 or 2, subtract 2; if 3 or 4, subtract 1; if 5 or 6, do nothing; if 7 or 8 add 1, if 9 or 10 add 2 and if higher and 3 to the total.

If the result is 0 or less, then the attacker makes two strikes - the first on segment 1, the second on segment (10+total). If the result is 11 or greater, the attack comes in the following round, on segment (total-10).

For spells with material components a round must be spent in preparation, and for all spells the initiative rolled applies to the start of casting.

Spell durations should only be converted to the new timescale if they are combat-orientated - ie, a Mordenkainen's transformation lasts one new segment per old segment, but a *fool's gold* will last 6 new segments (or 3, if two second segments are used) per old one.

Surprise gives five segments per point of surprise, in which the surprised person can only defend, and - after the first 5 segments - flee.

For missile weapons, halve the fire rate. 1 heavy crossbow bolt per 40 seconds makes much more sense than one every two minutes.

When an unprepared weapon must be drawn, add 3 to the initiative roll.

Mike de Pompei, Sudbury, Mass, USA: Responding to Gary Lea's question in WD78, my group has taken the AD&D combat system one stage further to incorporate all the loose ends. Instead of looking at the system as divided into rounds, you must look at it as being a continual line of segments, grouped in tens for easy reference. Once you are past surprise, which is self-explanatory, each attacker must roll d6 (initiative) and add that number to his weapon speed factor (or the time it takes to cast a spell). This gives you the time it takes to complete the action, continuing into the next round if necessary. When the action is completed, you repeat the process, picking up from where the last action left off.

This system works best when you draw a bunch of squares (segments) in clumps of ten (rounds), and mark them off as they go by, with notes written in as to when this orc is going to land his mace, etc. Needless to say, this becomes very complicated when there is more than a small skirmish, but the players can usually manage the time-keeping for their own characters.

Neil Grant, Ynysybwl, Mid Glam: Gobbledigook. No, not the strip, but Matthew Salter's theories concerning the existence of dwarves, elves, goblins, etc (WD78).

While he manages to justify the demi-humans well enough, he forgets about the other monsters which cannot be justified, like dragons or basilisks. Nor can his theory justify magic beyond the level of tricksters doing sleight-of-hand stuff in the marketplaces.

As for Elf, Dwarf and Goblin being in the language long before Tolkien, so were gorgon and hydra, etc, none of which he can explain away. Nor can he produce any rationale for the myriads of monsters created by D&D gamers, as these don't even exist in mytholgy and therefore can't be justified by saying "What is believed is effectively real."

I suggest Gary Lea checks out the initiative system contained in the fanzine *Miser's Hoard*, issues 4-6. As for the *Imagine* initiative system, that was the biggest load of *!%@% ever written. It ignored 98% of the things a good initiative system should take notice of, and was the only system in which a lumbering, encumbered, Dex 6 fighter with a club gets to strike before an unencumbered Dex 18 thief with a rapier.

Apart from the original system, that is.... Well that's three different initiative systems on the letters page (one last issue), and one in a fanzine. All of them abandon the abstract one minute combat round, of course, which seems absolutely ludicrous except when tacked onto a completely abstract combat system. How can you run 10 second combat round in a game where you can't kill in a single blow once you've passed the first few levels?

Hugh Forster, Salford: I read and wholeheartedly agreed with the bod who said *Lankhmar* was the best thing since sliced bread. The map mistakes mentioned and the slip about Alyx the Peacock (read the books!) are the only errors I've found; a unique achievement. I have a campaign going, and adventures tend to write themselves. The trade table is especially useful, and not just in Lankhmar.

The language table does need doing. I've culled a few from the books, so maybe this would suffice:

d100	Language	Origin	Map No
01-04	Forest Tongue	Great Forest	9
05	Old Ghoulish	Ghoul's City	29
06-21	High Lankhmarese	Lankhmar	29, generally on continent
22-53	Low Lankhmarese	Lankhmar	31, "common" on continent
54-58	Ilthmart	Ilthmar	24
59-60	Quarmallian	Quarmall	39
61-65	Mingol	Steppes	/
66-70	3+ different	Eastern Lands (various)	20,21,26
71-73	Eevan-marensee	Eevanmarensee	27
74-78	Kokgnab	Kokgnab	42
79-80	Rimic	Rime Isle	5a
81-87	Kuarchish	Kuarch Nar	11,12,13,14, 15,16,17,18
88-90	Desert-talk	Quarmall Barrens	41
91-94	Kleshite	Klesh	40
95	Simorgyan	Simorgya (dead language)	la
96-00	Cold tongue	Cold Corner Cold Wastes	6,7,8

Thomas Brewer, Felixstowe: I must congratulate Graeme Drysdale on writing *Ashes to Ashes*. I think *raise* spells are used too frequently in D&D.

Hywel T Phillips, Swansea, Wales: Some comments on *Ashes to Ashes*. The use of another's body for resurrection seems more suited to reincarnation. It has always puzzled me how the party MU could call into being a troll with the soul of a friend in, say, the middle of a city. A mean trick is to have another creature from the table arrive, hungry and mean, while the characters are waiting for their reincarnated friend. Imagine the scene: the party desperately trying to befriend this monster for the first time ever - what intelligent monster wouldn't take advantage of this? At the least the monster could wait to be given all the PC's magical items, so all it has to do is sneak off before the real PC arrives. Or, claim the PC is a wandering monster and rush to the attack....

For resurrection, I always rule it requires the head, and at least 25% of the bones. I also rule that all other remains disintegrate at the time the spell is cast.

For examples of soul-to-soul conflicts, try reading Piers Anthony's *Cluster* series, especially *Chaining The Lady & Thousand Star*. Also, see Aiken Drum's subsumption in Julian May's *Saga of the Exiles*.

Alex Bardy, London N19: I think congratulations are in order for Laurielle. Not only has she got a beautiful name, a working brain and her name in *White Dwarf*, but ... but ... I think I'm already in love with her!!

Terry Kench, Bradford, Yorks: In response to Graeme Drysdale's article, I have a point to raise (sorry, no pun Intended!).

Poor or low-level characters should have some chance of being resurrected. If the character is played true to alignment, a deity might see the person as an asset. The mercenary attitude displayed by clerics who only raised the rich would surely offend their gods - remember the widow's mite? I would like to believe that the purity of a character's soul would be more important than riches in the purse.

Assuming the gods could be bothered with individuals, or were interested in seeing characters raised back to life (unlikely for a God of Death, or possibly even one of Life...), and that having a powerful, rich church doesn't matter to them either. Still, as a reward for being a good boy in the eyes of the church/temple, there ought to be some chance for lower-level characters to be brought back. How have other GMs justified resurrection in their campaigns?

Andy Device, Sutton Coldfield, West Mids: A point occured to me the other day in my AD&D campaign. If 'monsters' have treasure in monetary form (as they must have to make the game work), then where do they spend it? Surely not in human cities (since the world is based on a largely human-dominated society), as in most fantasy cities they would be killed on sight.

To make it worthwhile for monsters to hoard gold (apart from sentimental or curiosity value), they must have cities and societies of their own. This, however, raises another problem. If the monsters are numerous and organised to have their own cities, why haven't they flattened the relatively puny humans?

Hmmm. It might be easier to turn the argument the other way up, and have treasure in monster lairs in some other form than straight cash. Then they can be using whatever the thing is - tapestry, jewellery, gold cups or whatever - just because they are pretty and because whoever ***they*** *took them from probably valued them enough to lose their lives for. This makes more sense anyway; whoever thought anyone could even carry the average horde out of a dungeon?! Ten pound coins are enough to put holes in your pockets....*

Robert Andersson, Umea, Sweden: I would like to say something about the way your reviewer compared TSR's *Oriental Adventures* with FGU's *Bushido*. There isn't any game on the market today which can compete with Bushido. We all agree that the most important thing in an rpg is the background. A good game will provide much of that information. The re-viewer said OA has more background info-I totally disagree, OA has nothing Bushido hasn't.

Japan is a fantastic land in which to adventure, with so many peculiarities, such as the famous ninja. And that background needs a system fitted to it. TSR continues to squeeze money from a system which was old when Bushido arrived in 1981.

My advice to all you AD&D players who like to have a new place to slaughter in is to buy OA. For those who would like a good rpg about Japan, with atmosphere and a good gaming system, buy Bushido. Besides being better, it's even cheaper!

'Mad' Tom Lynton, Brighton, Sussex: Please put me in touch with Laurielle Miller (Letters, WD78), as I would like to ask her for a signed photograph and... what? No! Not the pulping machine! I'm too young to be fumigated!!

Mark Boyes, Guisborough, Cleveland: Here's a new topic for WD letter page discussions; what use are White Dwarf scenarios?

No, I'm not knocking the Dwarf. The problem is the same in all magazines and most 'bought' scenarios. Scenario writers pull characters, locations and events from their own campaigns, and expect us, the punters, to be able to fit them into ours. "Show a little imagination and adapt," you say. "No," I reply.

Once a Games Master has a campaign underway it is difficult to add lumps on if it is well thought-out beforehand. A couple of f'rinstances.

1. A typical AD&D scenario may involve a quest for a magical item, involving a trek through the wilderness, battling strange creatures and searching through a lost temple for the aforesaid magic thing.

Any GM with a concern for consistency would not use such a scenario (and you cannot say Dwarf has not printed such a scenario). The GM would not find an appropriate area in the campaign world for the adventure site (as most of the world has been detailed already), the resident monsters might not fit into his ecology pattern or whatever passes for race distribution in his world. Also, said magical thing is bound to have a history inconsistent with the GM's.

2. On a topical note, let's examine a typical *Golden Heroes* scenario.

Since all SHrpgs are basically the same, you would think that I, a *Champions* GM with a passing knowledge of GH, would be able to run something like *The Pilcomayo Project* with little difficulty. Not in my case you wouldn't.

I don't know what house policy is on superpower frequency, but it seems a little high for my taste. In the scenarios in Dwarf, in the back of the book and in the supplements, GW have introduced fifty super-heroes and -villains. It has taken Marvel twenty five years to do what you have done in one! You now have a campaign world full of heroes and villains, but keep adding new ones with every scenario.

For instance, it would be typical for a scenario to introduce a group of highly experienced heroes to show up the player characters. The immediate problem facing the GM is to explain to the players where these characters were when the Cheese Monster was taking over the earth the last time they played, or why they've never heard of them before. The GM can say "Oh, you've heard of them, but they've been adventuring in space/Australia/the 8th dimension for the last six months" only so many times.

Just because a superhero character generation system is easy to use, it doesn't mean it should be used frequently. Once all the players have interesting characters, and the GM has all the non-super-players he wants, the generation should only be used for characters whose origins occur after the campaign has started.

What I'm getting at is that, in a campaign, characters should reoccur, not be replaced and vanish into a ridiculous limbo. I am sure the heroes from Pilcomayo will not recur in WD, mainly as people who don't have the issue will not have the stats, and if you reprint them there would be an outcry. For all these reasons, I have never used a GH scenario as its stands.

Is it possible, then, to print integratable scenarios in a magazine? Sure, as long as it's *Judge Dredd* or *Paranoia* or some other game with a comprehensive background everyone agress on. Since I don't play Dredd and you haven't printed a Paranoia adventure, I'm hosed on; I haven't used a Dwarf scenario since WD29.

I don't have the answers, but I hope someone does.

In a fantasy campaign, if you have mapped in every detail to the extent that you can never cope with a new idea, then you have probably overdone the realistic world approach. Worlds can grow as PC experience grows; after all, no 18 year old new adventurer is going to know every major NPC in every town in every country in every part of the world. The GM needs to refine and detail knowledge as the PCs reach towards it, and that allows ideas - and scenarios - to be cut to fit.

Trickier to do in a 'real' world campaign, but - like the man says - I hope someone has the answers.

Mike Goldsmith, Lowestoft, Suffolk: I saw the letter from Chris Elliot and R Edwards in WD77. Whilst the recently released rpg has introduced old Joe (as we know him) to thousands of new perps, it seems some people have not grasped what JD the strip is all about. To do this you only need to read any interview with John Wagner/T B Grover.

In his recent interview in *Arkensword*, he was discussing the new audience in the USA that the Eagle (now Quality) reprints have brought to Judge Dredd. It seems the Americans are genarally reading the strips as a straight future cop comic. I've read comments by Americans saying how JD is "their idea of the law", etc. In other words, the 'Rambo Syndrome' that brought such trash as *GI Joe*, *GI Combat*, etc.

Do not let Britain fall into this trap. Judge Dredd is *Satire!!* He is a murdering swine - just ask Wagner.

If you can't find an interview, you only have to read a prog. Whilst a story can be a 'straight adventure', it is constructed so we can see a message behind it, ie, what a depraved future Mega-City One represents. So, all you new JD fans; enjoy the strip and stories, but *don't admire the Judge*.

That's it for another month. We've had perfumed letters, biro on bog-paper, word processed epics, illegible scrawls, but it beats making them up like they used to (another secret out of the bag - who says we're not honest around here?). Keep 'em coming.

Oh, and don't think I didn't notice all the naughty mentions of Laurielle Miller. You ought to be ashamed of yourselves. I'm sure she's not in the least bit interested in sending signed piccies, are you Laurielle ?

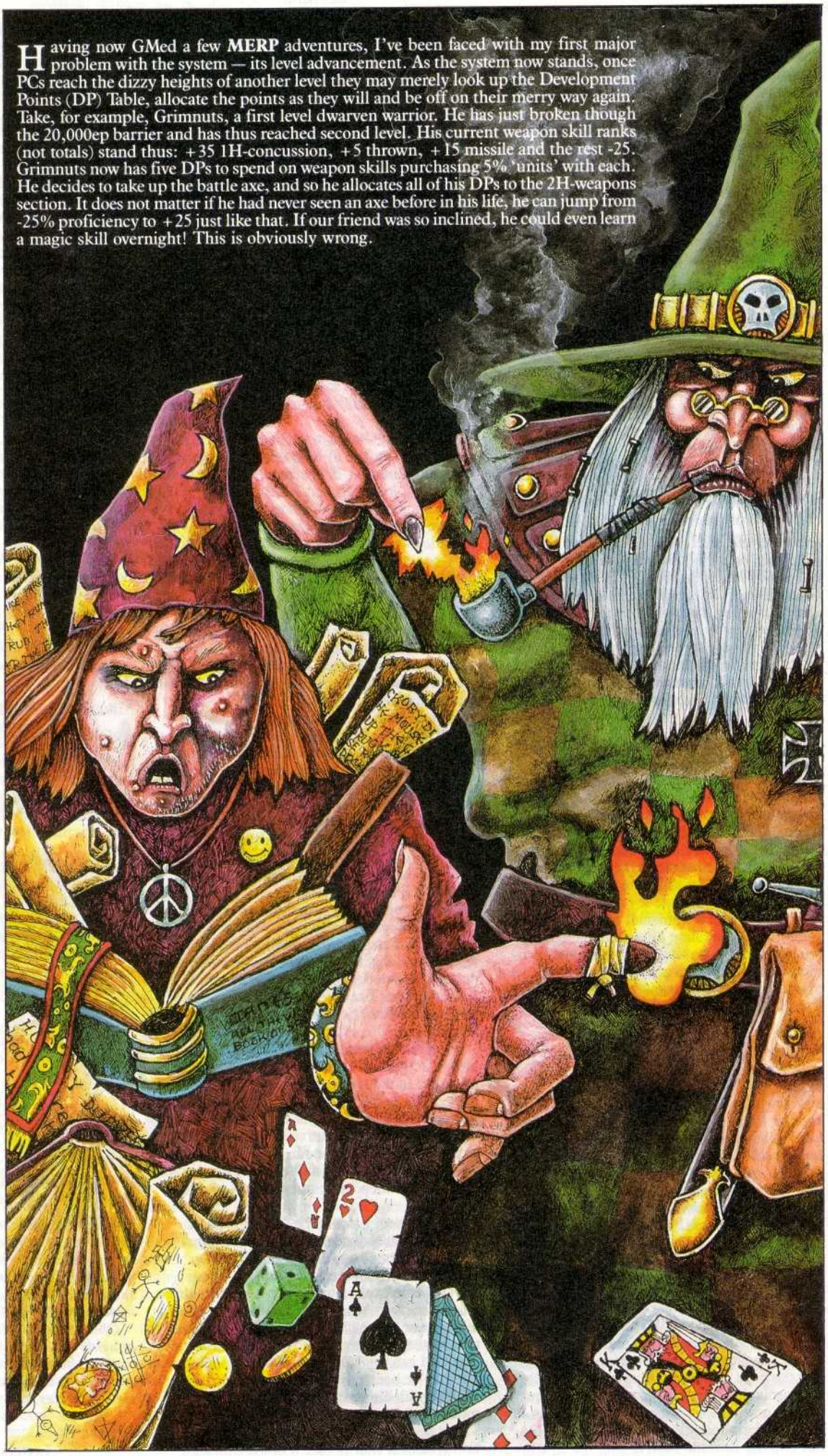
Letters edited by Paul Cockburn

up & coming

A LOOK AT LEVELS IN MIDDLE-EARTH ROLE PLAYING

by Martin Veart

Having now GMed a few **MERP** adventures, I've been faced with my first major problem with the system — its level advancement. As the system now stands, once PCs reach the dizzy heights of another level they may merely look up the Development Points (DP) Table, allocate the points as they will and be off on their merry way again. Take, for example, Grimnuts, a first level dwarven warrior. He has just broken though the 20,000ep barrier and has thus reached second level. His current weapon skill ranks (not totals) stand thus: +35 1H-concussion, +5 thrown, +15 missile and the rest -25. Grimnuts now has five DPs to spend on weapon skills purchasing 5% 'units' with each. He decides to take up the battle axe, and so he allocates all of his DPs to the 2H-weapons section. It does not matter if he had never seen an axe before in his life, he can jump from -25% proficiency to +25 just like that. If our friend was so inclined, he could even learn a magic skill overnight! This is obviously wrong.



Dave Superstar Andrews © 1986

I think what the game designers had in mind was that such skills developed gradually over the course of a character's life; and the advancement in levels were to simulate the point when skills are developed sufficiently as to become useful. To my mind, however, this system does not work properly — the jump from -25% skill to even +5% is too extreme to account for this breakthrough to having a 'useable' skill. Some training is necessary, even if it only the PC conciliating his experiences.

By the layout of Tolkien's world, it is clear that there are no adventurers' guilds as such. I personally feel that while such agencies are well suited to 'worldless' systems like *D&D*, they are not the answer here. Guilds would be alien to Middle Earth, and would spoil its unique flavour. No, the solution lies in the individual approach.

Having just slagged off what I imagine to be the game designers methods, I will now reinstate them — in their proper context. Of course people get better at things that they practice regularly. To simulate this the PC should be allowed to increase a skill by one rank (5%) *if he already has at least one DP assigned to that skill.* This would be without any need for training (eg, because Grimnuts has DPs already assigned to 1H-concussion weapons, he can use a DP to increase that skill automatically if he so desires). If a PC wishes to increase his skill by more than one rank, or wishes to develop a skill that he is deficient in, what then?

I suggest that two options be made available: self training and teaching.

Do It Yourself

Self training would be the slower but cheaper of the two methods. If the PC already has experience in the skill (eg, has at least one rank), then he could train himself for a few hours a day. It would take a week of this for each additional DP put on the skill.

Example: *Grimnuts wishes to put three DPs into his 1H-concussion sector. The first one he can do automatically because he has had constant practise at bashing people (well orcs) on the head with his trusty +10 mace. The second DP would be added after Grimnuts had practised with such weapons for a few hours every day for a week. If he kept up this practice into the third week then his rank would rise a further +5 at the end of the period, thus bringing his rank up to a skull crushing +50.*

If the character has no previous experience in the desired skill, but it is not completely alien to his profession (ie, does not have to transfer DPs in a ratio of 4:1 as, say, Grimnuts would have to if he wanted to learn a magical skill), then he may teach himself to a proficiency of 5% with one week of constant study. The student may not indulge in any other activity during this period, and owing to their special nature, horse riding and trap detection cannot be learned in this manner (you can doubtless picture the pointless exercise of a layman trying to design, set and then disarm a trap; as for novice horse riding without guidance, it's fine if the PC is really into broken bones). Unless the character likes scaring peasants, ambush skill development requires the services of a willing helper.

Skills that are out of the PC's professional field also cannot be self taught. The result of Grimnuts trying to learn to Read Runes for instance would probably result in him internalising a few spells, or in extreme cases, vaporising his own torso. Entertaining to any spectators, but not conducive to healthy living.

School's In

The second method, **tuition**, is quicker but has its own problems. Students who have had previous experience in their subject will only need a days tuition (but see below) for each required increase in rank. This, to my mind, is not unreasonable, since one is talking about a paltry five percent rise.

If the PC is not ranked in a skill, then a couple of hours a day for a week should be enough to teach the basics. Alien skills would take longer; constant tuition for at least a week.

Obviously, the tutor has to have a greater skill ranking than the student. Thus the higher the skill level of the character, the harder to find, and the more expensive the teacher. I know it sometimes doesn't work like that in the real world, but this is fantasy! I will not attempt to lay down teacher's wages, partly for fear of being politically branded, but in Tolkien's world the cost would be in gold, even for the lowliest tutor. Section 4.25 on page forty two of the rule book — *Associates of the Player Characters* — could come in handy. Another drawback with teachers is actually finding one. This will greatly depend on the area that the PCs find themselves in. A mage may not find it too difficult to find a willing mentor in Lorien, but might have problems in The Shire!

Remember, whether PCs are training themselves or employing a tutor, they will have to supply the necessary equipment, or pay through the nose for their tutor to do so. 'Equipment' might mean anything from a selection of weapons of the right type, to somewhere to practice climbing.

The length of training time given in this article is of course only a guide to what the average time should take. One cannot expect a plain, honest, loyal, dependable, thick-as-a-brick dwarf such as Grimnuts to learn magic as quickly as some bright, intelligent, poetic, lyrical woofter of an elf who went to finishing school in Nargothrond. Nor could you expect that same wimp of an elf to wield a mace with the fluent ease that brawny Grimnuts seems to manage. If lessons on mace swinging were given to this unlikely couple, then one could expect the elf to grasp the concepts of the lesson quicker than Grimnuts, but to fall down on the practical side, and vice versa with Grimnuts. If a third scholar joined the class, and he possessed the physical attributes of our dwarven friend, and the mental dexterity of the elf, then one would expect him to learn the quickest. A formula to explain these different learning speeds is given below.

The Intelligence Value + The Prime Stat Value of the subject being studied = The time modifier of the course being taken.

The Prime Stat is that listed on the character sheet as being most important in performing the skill (eg, strength for 1H-concussion weapons, intuition for riding etc).

If the figure found is expressed as a percentage, this can be read as the proportion of the course the students does not have to take. The higher the figure, the shorter the course. Alternatively, the lower the figure, the longer the time needed to complete the course.

If Grimnuts has an intelligence value of -5, and a strength value of +20 then these two values when added together equal +15. Now Grimnuts is teaching himself 1H-concussion weapon skill, which would normally take a week. Because he is more adept at the subject due to his great physique, he completed the course in fifteen percent less time, or just over a day quicker, than somebody would if they were of average strength and intelligence. If Grimnuts was of average intelligence then he would have completed the course nearly a day and a half faster than Mr Average (0 + 20).

Since *MERP* tends to emphasize the dangers of risky living, it is only right that this aspect of adventuring should be reflected even in training. Thus, when training in skills that in normal usage would contain an element of physical or mental risk, the PC should be made to make a roll as if normally employing that skill at his current level. Regard all results except fumbles as successfully completed training. Fumbles would have to be rolled for normally, with the following modifiers:

- Students with previous experience in the subject who are in self training have a Medium menoeuvre modifier. Students under a tutor have an Easy manoeuvre modifier.
- Students with no previous experience in the subject who are trying to treach themselves have a Hard modifier. Those under the direction of a tutor have a Light manoeuvre modifier.
- If some gormless PC is determined to teach himself a subject that is restricted to tuition only, then give him a Absurd roll on the suitable table, then get your fumble charts ready ....
- Even if the student fumbles during training, the course should be regarded as successfully completed at the end of the required time if the PC was physically able to carry on the lesson. Of course, the GM does not have to tell the PC this ....

I sincerely hope that these demented ramblings will aid all you beleaguered GMs. It should smooth out those irregular jumps that one finds in *MERP* without either adding too much to your workload or detracting from the flavour of the game. It also fits in with my philoshopy of handling PCs in any system: don't give; make 'em pay!

FRACAS!

Joining this esteemed publication soon (no, not another new editor - well, not immediately anyway), will be that jewel of his own advertising copy, Mike Brunton. It probably isn't politic to say where he has come from, but many of you old-timers will remember Mike as Editorial Assistant on *Imagine*, the old *Players Association Newsletter* editor, and now as the compiler of the newsheet, *Bohemian Earspoon*. If you believe the ad Mike's - um - old company ran in *White Dwarf 79*, the man is to gaming magazines what Richard Branson is to power boats (one sunk, the other moving faster than expected). He's also a figure painter *par excellence*, which seems to complete GW's monopoly of the best figure painters in the land. Anyway, Mike will arrive in time for next issue, to lend his unique style to the Dwarf.

This item compiled under the regulations governing the state of emergency.

News from overseas, part one. Task Force Games have a giant of a game out for *Star Trek* fans. Called *Federation & Empire*, it is a wargame in which the Galactic War is recreated in huge detail. The war starts as the Lyrans attack Kzinti space, then the Klingons and the Romulans join the Coalition, while the Hydrans, the Gorns and a reluctant Federation form an alliance to hold the line. The game has two large maps, 1,080 counters, and the rules system is separate to, though not completely removed from, the *Star Fleet Battles* rules, which covers individual battles from the same war.

The game was released in the USA in June, and the bad news is that it costs $39.95 out there. Also from TFG, there is *Star Fleet Battles - Commander's SSD Book No3* (a revised edition); *the novice edition Introduction to Star Fleet Battles*; *The Gorm-Khanate War* for *Starfire* and *New Empire*; *The Gauntlet*, a commercial training ground setting, for *Car Wars*, *Battlecars*, and other highway fun; and *Grimtooth's Traps* and *Grimtooth's Traps Too* - 200 snares, pits, poisons and traps.

News from overseas part two - and more good news for Trekkie fans. Three more board games from West End are on sale now. *Star Trek III* is a triple solo game pack, with three different, fast-moving solitaire games. *The Kobayashi Maru* recreates the most infamous test of them all, the one that Kirk cheated in to become the only Star Fleet Command officer to beat the 'no win' scenario. *The Sherwood Syndrome* is a game in which a renegade sociologist has recreated a pseudo-medieval society on another planet. The crew of the Enterprise must depose him, but without using their advanced technology. *Free Enterprise* is a trading game, where you need to be quick to beat the Klingons out of the lime-green frofnobles market...

Box two is *Star Trek: The Enterprise' Encounter*. Trelane, the Squire of Gothos, has captured the crew of the Enterprise, and scattered them on four worlds from their past in a deadly game. Somehow, the player must rescue the whole crew, solving some sneaky puzzles, and fighting some desperate battles.

Finally, there's *Star Trek: The Adventure Game*, which can be played either solo, or as a two-player game. Once again, it's the Federation against the Klingons, but this time outright war is banned by the Organian treaty, so you must use diplomacy - or localised force - to pursuade newly discovered and non-aligned planets to join your side. The game uses the solo gamebook paragraph system to discover how you fare on each planet.

TSR's next shipment in from the USA contains many items which should really cause a stir. The three most important are the *Immortals Set* for D&D (£9.95), the *Dungeoneers' Survival Guide* for AD&D (£11.95) and the *Marvel Super Heroes Advanced Set* (£9.95). Each of these products should become major sellers for TSR, since they have been expected for quite a while. The Immortals Set might fill some people with dread, since it covers D&D characters into demigodhood, but it has some clever notions which keep the game very much under control. News and reviews of these products to follow - watch this space.

More news on the miracle gaming gadget of the decade. You remember - how could you forget - the d100, one-dice percentile generator from GameScience, of Gulfport, Mississippi? Well, Lou Zocchi, GameScientist, has decided that there is only one way to make this dice the only one to have. He wants to publish a set of tables in a book, sort of like the *Book of Lists*, for use with your spherical randomiser. And, he invites *White Dwarf* readers to lend a hand.

So, what is the most indispensible d100 table you have stashed away among your file cards and rulebooks? Your Top 100 Monsters? 100 different bits for a blade trap to lop off? Well, Lou wants to hear from you! And being the generous chaps we are, we're going to offer three mega-wonderful, amazin' d100s as prizes to the three entries we think are the most wonderful. We will also send off all the lists to Lou, who can then realise what a wierd bunch British gamers are. Send your list into *Lou's List Competition*, White Dwarf, Games Workshop Design Studio, Enfield Chambers, 16-18 Low Pavement, Nottingham NG1 7DL by September 1st to qualify for entry. We'll publish the results in issue 82 or 83.

As for the last competition we ran, we were completely over-whelmed by the enormous number of *Samantha Fox rpg* entries in the Caption Contest (WD78). Naughty rude boys. In the end, *Moustaches, Spies & Private Eyes* has earned Nicholas Dragl, of Rushden, Northants the wonderful *Rrib-bit Battle of the Frogs* and the Cthulhu Hardback.

Lastly on this subject, those people still waiting for the results of the scenario competition from the end of last year (!) can draw some comfort from the fact that we have found the entries again after the move, and will crack on with getting them judged.

Meet the stars - Steve Jackson and Ian Livingstone will be signing FF books 10am-1pm on Saturday, 16th August at Boots the Chemist, Stoneborough Castle in Maidstone. Maidstone Boots will have already started to take over roleplaying in Kent by having the live-action team from Mythlore in on July 26th, and they are also due to have a famous Citadel figure painter in the store on August 7th-8th-9th and 14th-15th-16th. There will be competitions for painters to enter, as well as the chance to pick up tips.

If you enjoyed this issue of ***White Dwarf***, and find yourself getting curious about the fantasy worlds of author Brain Lumley, you could do worse than pick up a copy of the excellent ***Dagon 13***. New Cthulhu mythos fiction, an interview and much more. ***Dagon*** is fast becoming completely indispensible

for players of ***Call of Cthulhu***, as it always has plenty of new ideas and material. A six-issue subscription costs £4.50 in the UK, and is available from Carl Ford, 11 Warwick Road, Twickenham, Middlesex TW2 6SW. Issue 14 will be out in mid-September, with a Ramsey Campbell story, an article on Fear and its uses, and a new CoC scenario.